

Chapter 1: V is for Valentine

"Icky Vicky *is* very Icky!" Aug insisted to Brad. He sat down on the chaise lounge cracking open the Tecate Brad handed him. "You just haven't seen her without her face on!"

Brad sat down in a separate lounge. He cracked open a Bud. The rising morning sun shone over the back of the enclosed pool area. He swilled some swill before putting the can on a small plastic table between them. "Put a grocery bag over her head?" Brad wetly replied. "Is that what you are saying?"

Aug threw down some brew. "You know" Aug answered "that's the thing about progress, isn't it? There's always a downside to progress on anything. It used to be that you could put a brown grocery sack over a broad's head and not look at what you are doing. Now?" He guzzled. "Now ya go to the grocery store and get a flimsy plastic bag that don't do a thing. Ya can rip right through that bag in a second and then the ugliness is in front of you." He guzzled some more. "And then whaddaya do? Kiss her?"

Brad lounged back. He looked up at Aug thinking about what Aug was saying. He loudly told Aug "My, god man! You make it sound like Vicky was the entry you brought to an ugly date contest!" His drink made its way back into his hand. "So whatcher sayin' in that when ya do Victoria Cuevas you put a plastic bag over her head? Or are you sayin' you put a plastic bag over your head? Or are ya saying you don't like sharing a little tongue action with her?" He sipped at his Bud. "I bet you didn't mind a little tongue action with Jocelyn, now, did you? I mean, it's kinda like any port in a storm, right? Bag over the head or not, what the difference?"

Aug brought the beer to his lips saying "Me? Aww I ain't wearing no bag over...Hey!" Aug stopped as he caught Brad's drift "hey! Whatchu talkin' bought there Jewlis!" Aug grinned as he put his hand to his pants. "My head may be ugly but she don't mind touching it anyway." He drank more cold T.

"Well" Brad retorted "Maybe if you're as ugly as you say *she* is you gotta choice between sandpaper or plastic!" Brad pointed at Aug and sipped his brew. "Anyway, the question wasn't about you. The question was about you doin' Vicky. The question was if you had a choice a doin' Jocelyn or Vicky which would you do?" Brad sipped a little more. "*La Chiquita* or...or...or" he tried to think of an apt description "or well I don't know the buxomy one."

Brad schlepped some more. "I mean, I bet that for Valentine's day tonight Icky Vicky's not gonna be waitin' for you without her face on lookin' as Icky as she can!" Brad chided. "Cuz, Icky or not, without her face on I bet she ain't gonna be lookin' that way tonight!" Brad put his feet up and his Bud back. "So, are you telling me yer bringin' her a bag to on her head tonight?" Brad kicked at Aug with his feet derisively laughing "You do that and I think I'm gonna be askin' *you* 'Whatchu talkin' bout, Screwless?'"

Aug looked at Brad with a sheepish chuckling grin. "Yeah, yer right" Aug said. "That probably wouldn't be a good idea to do towards getting' some!"

"Hell" Brad continued "It's Valentine's Day." Brad reached into his unbuttoned short pocket. "You gotta work hard *Not* to get any tonight!" He lay a BIC lighter down on the table.

Aug had beer in his mouth when Brad spoke. His head rapidly shook trying to avoid choking and spitting out his brew. "MMMpphh Ummphh" Aug garbled before swallowing. "That is so not true."

"Why?" Brad asked. "You tellin' me she don't enjoy it?"

Aug wiped spittle from his mouth's edge. "Oh no" he said waving his arm. "You said I wouldn't have to work hard..."

Brad cut him off. "You need some blue pills? Is that what your sayin'?"

"No I..." Aug stopped tilting his head "Well, yes, well...I mean...well...you ever try and get it up while listening to *The Power of Love*? I mean, damn, now *that* is workin' hard!"

"Heeeeyyyy" Brad said. "This homey don't swing that way."

"Yeah, well, you're lucky!" Aug argued. "It's damn hard..." he stopped a second before starting "...I mean...it's damn soft...well...it's hard to get hard hearing goddamn Celine Dion crap going through your skull! I mean, that broads so damn skinny and shrill and them songs are so sappy it's like how the hell did I end up with the Mexican broad who likes that crap! Goddamn NAFTA! The worst of Canada mixed with the best of Mexico here In the US!" Aug exclaimed. "The Tecate is nice but, damn, they shoulda kept dat broad in the hinterland!"

Brad couldn't contain his laughter. "What's so funny?" Aug asked. "You like listening to Celine when balling?"

"Oh hell no" Brad said. "I couldn't hump to that crap either. Hell, you deserve some Viagra to screw to that!" Brad got Weiser. "Nah, when you said *The Power of Love* I was thinkin' like Frankie, ya know?" Aug stupidly looked at Brad. "Frankie?" Brad said. "Frankie Goes to Hollywood? *The Power of Love*, *A Force from Above*? *Flame on Burn Desire*, *Love, With Tongues of Fire*? *Make Love your Goal*."

Aug looked down at his left hand of God. Surgery had repaired much of the bone structure but scarring remained. He idly mumbled "*Make Love your Goal*." A guzzle of beer went down the hatch. He turned to Brad with a slight chuckle that broadened into a smile. "You sure you don't swing that way? I've always wondered about you!"

"Heeeeyyyy" came Brad's Vinnie Barbarino reply "Just cause I don't mind a little music by some queers don't mean I'm sippin' salami sauce, ya know." Brad sipped some sauce from his can before opining. "You know all them people at the ballparks around the USA and everywhere

they ain't be thinking about how queer the Village People were when they get up and do the YMCA, ya know. They just get up and make some like gay Twister moves to a simple beat never thinking about how much fudge was packed by that group!"

"Yeah...or how much all them other rock songs that get played are like from people who did heroin" Aug rejoined. *"Welcome to The Jungle, Baby, you're gonna die!"* He finished his beer and stood up. "Hello! Heroin music! All these people in society walk around and complain about how people get off whether sexually and recreationally...about how they don't want their kids to be queer or addicts...and then they go out and enjoy the artistic compositions the druggies and homos put out. Kinda doesn't make sense, does it?" Aug jiggled his empty. "I'll get me another."

Brad stood up and started walking away. "Grab me another; I'll turn some music on." He walked up the porch steps into the dining room.

Aug got up and took the couple steps to the well-stocked pool mini-fridge. The obviousness of the freshly stocked fully loaded alcohol smacked of impending party. Another Tecate and Bud were snagged.

Rock music kicked in. Lively rock music. It sounded good; it sounded anciently familiar but Aug couldn't place it. The music gave energy. It had been a long night and it was going to be another long day and night and he needed sleep yet here he was drinking early in the morning. *Man how life has changed* he thought. *I used to think about having a job and...I used to have a day job and be at work at regular times and a wife and think about a house and a family...and here I am like a college student partying in the morning. How my concept of reality has changed. What I see now is so different than what I saw then back when Laurie and I were married.*