

**VANESSA**

**SITHIA QUEEN**

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First published in 2022 by the Colton Review

Cover illustration by Ben Plod  
Author illustration by Ksenija Petranovic

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# Vanessa

*by Sithia Queen*

“Wait!” I fucked up. I fucked up *real* bad. I can’t believe I said the wrong name. “Valerie, wait!”

She keeps running, deaf to my protests, her heels clacking on the shoddy park pavement, throwing water droplets against the heavy rain.

I slow down, wheezing already, and put my hands on my knees. I’m so out of shape. God, why did a girl like Valerie decide to go on a date with me? Mercilessly pelted, I try to take shelter under a tree. Water soaks my socks, one expensive shoe long lost to my chase.

I look up at the gray sky and let the rain wash my face. I check my wallet; my debit card is missing. At least I have my keys.

I pull myself up by the bark of the tree and walk back the way I came. It takes a good thirty minutes to get back to the restaurant. I’m exhausted. I walk through the front door and approach the host stand. The hostess returns my card. I order a cheesecake to go; God knows I’m not losing weight anytime soon.

She hands me a little foam container and plastic utensils. I turn to leave. The storm rages on, but the cheesecake will live.

I walk slowly to the metro and get on the subway to my neighborhood. Nobody bothers to look my way as I enjoy my soggy cheesecake. It’s not particularly good, but the sweetness dampens the bite of Valerie’s disappointment. *I should apologize to her.*

I make it to my tiny apartment, unlock the door, and step in, shedding clothes before I even lock the door. I’ll wipe the water up later.

I put my somehow-dry phone on the kitchen counter and take a quick shower. There are no messages when I get back. *Whatever.* In an adjacent room, I sit on my bed and turn on the TV, then watch the news in my underwear. Storms, storms, and more storms. And yet, it’s calm inside.

Did Valerie make it back alright? Or did she break a heel and fall, scraping her bony knees up without anyone there to help her? Or maybe there is someone there to help her, while I sit here watching streets flood.

My phone rings from the kitchen; I let it ring, unwilling to move from my comfortable bed. Some minutes pass, and it rings again; I get up off my lazy ass and check it.

It's Vanessa.

I grit my teeth and pick up. "What do you want?"

"It's really coming down out there."

"Why did you call me? I've told you not to."

"You never blocked me, did you? And you're the one who answered."

I look at the kitchen sink. The faucet drips once.

"Can I come over?"

The faucet drips again.

"Do you need me?"

The faucet drips.

"Do you want me?"

I hang up, return to my bed, and turn off the TV. Chilled, I get under the covers and watch the pelting rain. Drenched in torrents of water, the grime of city life washes away. *I'll apologize to her tomorrow.*

## *About the Author*



**Sithia Queen** is an author, artist, and businesswoman. Her writing primarily revolves around middle-class monster people and their day-to-day struggles with body image, mental health, and interpersonal relationships. When she isn't writing, she spends her time reading, playing video games, and roaming the internet. She lives in West Virginia with her husband and her cat.

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