

LONELY HEARTS

Written by

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Based on a collective of true stories.

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TYPE WRITING BLACK AND WHITE CREDITS ROLLING TO SENSES FAIL'S

"THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD"

Music fades after the following lyrics: "I've been living like a shadow, disappearing with the sun, but life has always been a struggle, I know I'm not the only one..."

CREDITS as follows below:

EXT. OUTDOOR ART GALLERY - EARLY MORNING

Sunlight dapples the cobblestone path lined with vibrantly colored sculptures. Tristan (20s, floppy hair, looks sad but with hope) wanders through the outdoor gallery, hands clasped loosely behind his back. He wears a worn denim jacket over a faded t-shirt depicting a starry night sky. Every few steps, he stops to admire a piece, tilting his head and humming thoughtfully.

A towering metal sculpture shaped like a swirling vortex catches his eye. Tristan reaches out, tracing the cool metal with his fingertips. He imagines himself swept away in the current, transported to a world of pure imagination.

A few feet away, a group of TEENAGERS (16-18, loud laughter) pose for selfies in front of a brightly painted abstract mural. Tristan winces slightly at their boisterousness, then continues on.

He stumbles upon a cluster of whimsical metal sculptures. A family of giraffes with impossibly long necks grazes together. A playful cat chases a mischievous butterfly with oversized wings. Tristan smiles, his heart warming at the playful scene. He pulls out his worn sketchbook from his backpack and quickly jots down a rough sketch of the cat and butterfly.

Suddenly, a melodic sound catches his attention. A lone PAINTER sits perched on a weathered bench, her strokes on the canvas moving along with the melodic rhythm. Tristan stands mesmerized, his eyes closed, letting the music wash over him. He imagines the melody weaving a story of lost love and newfound hope.

As the last note fades, Tristan sighs, a touch of melancholy lingering in his eyes. He pockets his sketchbook and opens his eyes to find the violinist gone. He looks around the gallery, a slight pang of loneliness hitting him.

Spotting a quaint cafe across the street, Tristan decides it's time for a break. He adjusts his backpack and heads towards the cafe, a faint smile playing on his lips.

He may be alone, but the beauty of art and music has touched his soul, and who knows, maybe inside the cafe, he'll find inspiration for another hopeless romantic dream.

CU - HOT DOG STANDS

CU - ART STANDS

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Sunlight streams through the window, illuminating a bustling coffee shop. TRISTAN with a nervous smile, fidgets with his fingers as he waits in line. Behind him stands VIVIENNE (20s, stylish outfit, captivating smile). When she reaches the counter, Tristan gathers his courage.

TRISTAN
(clears throat)
Excuse me, the line might move
faster if you ordered with the
barista, not just stared at...

He trails off, his cheeks flushing as he realizes he's been caught staring. VIVIENNE turns around, her smile widening.

VIVIENNE
(laughing)
Sorry, wasn't trying to hypnotize
you. Just admiring the latte art.
Yours look... interesting.

TRISTAN glances down at his own coffee, a swirl of brown vaguely resembling a blob.

TRISTAN
(sheepishly chuckles)
Right, masterpiece in progress. I,
uh, I'm Tristan. By the way.

He extends his hand, his voice dropping an octave lower than usual. VIVIENNE'S smile softens.

VIVIENNE
Vivienne. Nice to meet you,
Tristan. And maybe next time, skip
the latte art and go for a classic
cappuccino?

TRISTAN
(grinning)
Only if you promise to share yours.

VIVIENNE raises an eyebrow, playfully intrigued.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN - THE NEXT WEEK

The sidewalk is riddled with pedestrians. We see VIVIENNE and TRISTAN walking by each other's sides.

TRISTAN
It's been a while since I visited
this part of the neighborhood.

VIVIENNE
Yeah? This area is cool. Always
something going on.

TRISTAN
Totally.
(stops to admire
impressive building
mural)
I'll never get tired of admiring
the art scattered all over the
city.

VIVIENNE
Neither will I, I find inspiration
in them.

TRISTAN
Sometimes I find it challenging to
be inspired by art itself.

VIVIENNE
There's always inspiration wherever
you look. You have to challenge
yourself to make that effort.

TRISTAN
You sound like an artist.

VIVIENNE
I am.
(turns to Tristan, smiles)

TRISTAN
That's really cool! What form of
art do you dabble in?

VIVIENNE

I mostly paint landscape portraits,
however, I'm still in my beginning
phase.

VIVIENNE pulls out her phone, showing TRISTAN her work.

TRISTAN

That's awesome! I have no patience
for art, when I draw or sketch I
feel like it's taking me a century
when it's probably only been like
five minutes.

(chuckles)

But you said beginning phase?
Meaning, you're just starting this
out?

VIVIENNE

Yeah, like a year ago.

TRISTAN

Wow, you certainly picked up quick.

VIVIENNE

I did. I guess it's my calling.
(chuckles)

TRISTAN

I heard there's this terracotta
sculpture gallery going on in a few
weeks. You may like it.

VIVIENNE

Terracotta statue gallery? That
sounds fascinating.

(looking around)

This place looks tempting, wanna
drink?

TRISTAN cautiously studying its appearance, then reluctantly
nods to VIVIENNE.

They enter.

INT. BAR - MOMENTS LATER

The bar buried underneath layers of scaffolding. They walk in
comfortable silence for a moment, admiring the interior
around them before they take a seat in a booth.

The dim glow of a neon beer sign barely pierces the thick
curtain draped over the entrance.

TRISTAN follows VIVIENNE through the makeshift passage, the smell of stale beer and cigarette smoke clinging to the air. Inside, the bar is a cacophony of sounds - laughter mingling with the clinking of glasses and the steady thrum of live music in the corner.

VIVIENNE navigates through the maze of wooden tables and mismatched chairs, her confidence a stark contrast to TRISTAN'S nervous glances around the room. Finally, she finds a booth tucked in a shadowy corner and slides in. TRISTAN follows suit, bumping the table with his knee.

VIVIENNE

(smiling)

Sorry, a bit cramped. Makes it more intimate, though, wouldn't you say?

TRISTAN

(chuckling nervously)

Uh, yeah, sure. Intimate.

VIVIENNE leans back, studying him with amusement.

VIVIENNE

You seem tense. Not used to these dive bars?

TRISTAN runs a hand through his hair.

TRISTAN

Maybe not exactly. I usually stick to rooftop bars with a view. More my scene. Or anywhere less cramped.
(nervously chuckles)

VIVIENNE

Ah, the city sophisticate. But you followed me anyway. Intrigued by the mystery lurking under the scaffolding?

TRISTAN

(grins)

Something like that. More intrigued by the woman who led me here, to be honest.

VIVIENNE raises an eyebrow, a playful glint in her eyes.

They order drinks, and for a while, comfortable silence settles between them. TRISTAN steals glances at VIVIENNE'S paintings hung haphazardly around the bar, each vibrant and raw with emotion.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

This art is cool. The colors are so bold, they practically jump off the canvas.

VIVIENNE

It fits the tone of the bar nicely.

TRISTAN

What got you into art all of a sudden?

VIVIENNE

Honestly, was looking for ways to help ease my mental health and be happier after a rough relationship.

TRISTAN

I see. It must have been incredibly intense.

VIVIENNE

Sure was something... of a learning experience.

TRISTAN

(nodding)

So, have you done anything new lately?

VIVIENNE

Not really, just finishing up this large canvas for an underground showing.

TRISTAN

Oh? Can I get a sneak peak?

VIVIENNE nods, smiles and pulls out her phone. Revealing to TRISTAN the work in progress.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Wow, now that is... hmm.

(intrigued, but flustered)

There's a lot going on over there. I really like the colors though!

VIVIENNE

Thank you. It's a way of channeling... stuff. Helps to process it all, you know?

TRISTAN

Yeah, I can see that. You mentioned it helped you through a recent... breakup?

VIVIENNE nods, swirling her drink thoughtfully.

VIVIENNE

Yeah, about a year ago. It wasn't pretty, and it left me a little... raw, to say the least.

TRISTAN

Makes sense. Throwing those emotions onto a canvas seems like a healthy way to deal with it.

VIVIENNE

It is. But it also means I'm not exactly ready to jump back into the dating pool.

TRISTAN feels a pang of disappointment, quickly masked by a sheepish grin.

TRISTAN

Oh, no, totally understand. I, uh, just meant it's nice meeting someone who's passionate about something. Like you with art. Me, I'm a history buff. Did you know the Romans actually used concrete? Pretty revolutionary for their time.

VIVIENNE laughs, a bright sound that fills the corner.

VIVIENNE

That's actually fascinating! I love learning about ancient civilizations. Did you know they had a whole system of public libraries?

They continue talking for hours, delving into their passions, surprising each other with unexpected knowledge. As the bar starts to empty and the music fades, TRISTAN finally works up the courage to ask his question.

TRISTAN

This has been... amazing. You're even more captivating.

VIVIENNE smiles warmly.

VIVIENNE

I feel the same way. So, about that sculpture gallery next week...

TRISTAN

(Smiling back)

Absolutely. But maybe after, we could grab a drink? No dark, smoky bars this time. How about that rooftop bar with the view?

VIVIENNE

(smiles widely)

Okay. You can pick the bar this time then!

TRISTAN

I've got a couple in mind.
(smirks)

EXT. BROOKLYN - FOLLOWING WEEK

TRISTAN ahead of VIVIENNE as she lags behind scrolling on her phone.

TRISTAN followed his phone while scrolling around on GPS.

VIVIENNE admiring TRISTAN from her view.

VIVIENNE

Hey, are you sure you know where you're going?
(chuckling)

TRISTAN

Uh, of course I do. Doubting me, are we?

VIVIENNE

(laughing)
Maybe only because you look like you're following your phone.

TRISTAN

(tucking his phone away, a touch defensively)
Please, Viv. This place is practically ingrained in my memory. You could blindfold me and I'd find it. It's a hidden gem, tucked away from the usual tourist traps.

He glances back, seeing VIVIENNE lagging behind, bundled in her scarf and laughing.

VIVIENNE

Lost in the latest meme, are we?
You know, this city's full of
surprises. You might miss something
interesting staring at that screen
all night.

TRISTAN

Girl, please. I know where I'm
going.
(pounds chest with pride)

VIVIENNE

(catching up with a
playful smile)
Alright, alright, Mr. New York
Expert. Just promise it's worth the
chilly detour. My toes are already
starting to feel like ice cubes.

TRISTAN

Consider them a small price to pay
for a night you won't forget. Trust
me, the atmosphere, the drinks -
it'll be like stepping into another
world. Plus, they have this
fireplace that practically roars.
Your toes will thank me later.
(He throws her a wink, a
hint of nervousness
masked by confidence)

VIVIENNE

(rolling her eyes
playfully)
Another world, huh? Sounds
intriguing. Just don't get us lost
in Narnia on the way, okay?

TRISTAN

Narnia? No chance. This is a much
cooler secret spot. Besides, even
if I was a little turned around,
getting lost with you wouldn't be
the worst fate, would it?
(He shoots her a charming
grin, hoping to cover his
internal GPS meltdown)

They arrive on a street of bars.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)
 ...annnnnnnd voila.
 (bows)

VIVIENNE
 Alright, you win this round.

INT. VARIOUS BARS - QUICK MONTAGE - WEEK LATER

We see TRISTAN and VIVIENNE sitting across from each other in a booth. Background changing from one bar to another.

We see a board game on the table, their hands intertwined, and two glasses between them.

SOUND: Upbeat music fades in and out with each bar change. A playful clatter of dice rolling.

We see TRISTAN and VIVIENNE across from each other in a booth at a trendy bar. The background quickly changes, showing them at different bars: a classic pub with exposed brick walls, a dimly lit jazz bar, and a rooftop bar overlooking the city skyline.

INT. BAR #1 (TRENDY)

VIVIENNE
 (laughing)
 Ugh, snake eyes again! You're definitely cheating, Tristan.

TRISTAN
 (grinning)
 Me? Cheat? Never. You just need to learn the art of the lucky roll.

INT. BAR #2 (PUB)

TRISTAN
 (leaning in)
 Did you see that documentary about artisanal cheesemaking last night? So fascinating!

VIVIENNE
 (nodding)
 The one with the goats in the French countryside? Totally!

INT. BAR #3 (ROOFTOP)

VIVIENNE
(staring at the city
lights)
This view never gets old, does it?

TRISTAN
(reaching for her hand)
No, it doesn't. Especially not with
you by my side.

INT. FINAL BAR - COZY, DIMLY LIT

Back to the original booth.

The game board lies forgotten between them, two empty glasses
alongside it. They're both smiling, VIVIENNE resting her head
on TRISTAN'S shoulder.

VIVIENNE
Three bars in a week, and I still
haven't caught you on your phone
once.

TRISTAN
(sheepishly)
Well, maybe I peeked once or twice
at directions... but only because
you were so busy rolling snake eyes
all night.

VIVIENNE playfully punches him on the arm as he laughs. They
share a kiss.

FADE OUT.

EXT. BROOKLYN - ONE WEEK LATER - NIGHT

The two are seen walking down the shiny cobblestone, enjoying
the cool air breezing through the crisp autumn air as TRISTAN
and VIVIENNE stroll along the Brooklyn waterfront.

They finally find a bench to sit on. The streetlights cast a
warm glow on the cobblestone path, and the distant hum of
traffic creates a low, rhythmic soundtrack. TRISTAN holds a
can of beer, and VIVIENNE clutches a steaming cup of coffee.

TRISTAN

(taking a swig of his
beer)

Man, walking along the water makes
you realize just how big this city
is.

VIVIENNE

(sipping her coffee)

It does, doesn't it? But there's
something calming about it too.
Like it just keeps going on no
matter what.

They stop at a small, weathered bench overlooking the East
River. The water shimmers under the moonlight, reflecting the
twinkling lights of Manhattan across the way.

TRISTAN

(gesturing towards the
city skyline)

Mind if I steal your view for a
second?

VIVIENNE smiles and pulls her coat tighter around herself as
TRISTAN sits down on the bench. She follows him, settling in
beside him.

VIVIENNE

(taking in the view)

Wow. This is beautiful.

TRISTAN

(cracking open his beer)

Yeah, it is. Never gets old, no
matter how many times you see it.

They sit in comfortable silence for a moment, just watching
the water flow and the city lights dance across the river.

VIVIENNE

(pointing to a
particularly tall
skyscraper)

Remember that documentary we
watched about the history of that
building?

TRISTAN

(laughing)

The one where they almost ran out
of steel halfway through
construction? How could I forget?

VIVIENNE
 (grinning)
 Right? Crazy to think there's so
 much history right there across the
 water.

They continue talking, their conversation flowing as easily
 as the river beneath them. They discuss everything from their
 favorite childhood memories to their hopes for the future. As
 the night deepens, a sense of comfortable intimacy settles
 between them.

TRISTAN
 (raising his beer can in
 a toast)
 To a week of great company and
 unexpected adventures.

VIVIENNE
 (clinking her coffee cup
 against his can)
 To unplanned walks and city views.
 Here's to hoping there are many
 more to come.

They share a smile, the city lights twinkling in their eyes.

TRISTAN
 We should make this night more
 interesting and go on an excursion
 to find a bathroom and more booze.
 (shakes empty brown paper
 bag covered can)
 Because I'm all out and I really
 gotta go.

VIVIENNE
 (laughing)
 So do I. Let's find the bathroom
 first.

CUT TO

INT. BROOKLYN BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

TRISTAN and VIVIENNE are at a small table, scattered UNO
 cards and half-empty cocktail glasses taking center stage.
 TRISTAN leans back in his chair, a playful smile on his face.

TRISTAN
 (tipsy)
 Ugh, another draw?
 (MORE)

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

You're on a roll tonight, Viv. My brain feels like it's turning into mush.

VIVIENNE

(smiling, wobbly)

Maybe a little too much mush for UNO strategy? Don't worry, I'll go easy on you... this time.

TRISTAN

(laughs)

Ha! Easy? That's a dangerous word.

(pauses)

You know, you're the first person in... well, a long time that I actually felt comfortable talking to about stuff. Feels weird, but kinda good.

VIVIENNE

(looks at him with genuine interest)

Weird good? Interesting choice of words. Why do you say weird?

TRISTAN

(takes a sip of his drink, then shrugs)

I guess I'm so used to keeping things bottled up. But with you... it's different. Feels safe, you know? Like I can actually be myself, even if myself is a little tipsy and rambling about emotions.

(blows lips)

I'm such a sap.

(chuckles)

VIVIENNE

(leans closer, her voice soft)

Hey, being vulnerable isn't a bad thing. It takes courage, actually. It's great that you feel safe enough to do that with me.

TRISTAN

(playfully raising eyebrows)

Safe enough, huh? That almost sounds like a challenge. Maybe I should unleash the full force of my... emotional vocabulary?

VIVIENNE
 (laughs, dramatically
 throws card on table)
 Oh please, do. Don't hold back on
 account of my poor UNO skills.
 (They both laugh, the
 tension broken.)

TRISTAN
 Alright, alright. But before I
 unleash the emotional beast, so,
 you mentioned art earlier. You said
 something about Frida Kahlo?

VIVIENNE
 (Eyes lighting up)
 Oh yeah! I saw one of her self-
 portraits in grade school and it
 totally hooked me. Her strength and
 boldness resonated with me, even
 back then.

TRISTAN
 (Nods thoughtfully)
 That makes sense. I haven't seen a
 lot of her work, but I know she's
 had a big comeback with younger
 artists.

VIVIENNE
 Exactly! It's about time. For too
 long, the conversation around art
 history was dominated by male
 artists. Their struggles, their
 triumphs, their perspectives. It
 felt one-sided, you know?

TRISTAN finds himself captivated by her passion. VIVIENNE'S
 passion into the subject is visible as she enlightens him
 with a deeper insight into art.

TRISTAN
 (leans in, intrigued)
 One-sided, for sure. But artists
 like Kahlo are helping to change
 that narrative. They're showing a
 different side, a more diverse
 range of experiences.

VIVIENNE
 (eyes sparkling)
 Absolutely! And it's not just about
 gender.

(MORE)

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)

There's a whole movement of artists from different backgrounds, ethnicities, sexual orientations. They're all bringing their unique voices to the table, and it's making the art world a richer, more complex place.

TRISTAN can't help but smile. He's not just enjoying their conversation; he's genuinely impressed by VIVIENNE'S intelligence and her fiery spirit.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)

(noticing Tristan smiling)
Why are you smiling so hard?
(giggles)

TRISTAN

(stammers)
Uh... nothing...
(leans back, scratches back of his head)

VIVIENNE

(playful)
C'mon! Spill them beans, handsome.

TRISTAN

I just found it very adorable how spirited you are with your interests.
(nervously smiles)

VIVIENNE

It gives me a new way of seeing life.

TRISTAN

(smiles, raises his glass in a toast)
To a richer, more complex art world. And to people who aren't afraid to be vulnerable, to share their stories.
(hiccups)

VIVIENNE

(clinking her glass to his)
Cheers to that!
(They both take a drink, a newfound sense of connection simmering between them.)

TRISTAN

Speaking of amazing artists, your acrylic piece with the strong colors? Totally got a Frida vibe. One of my favorites, honestly.

(Vivienne beams, a blush creeping up her cheeks.)

INT. BROOKLYN BAR - ONE WEEK LATER

TRISTAN and VIVIENNE perch on barstools, their laughter echoing against the low murmur of the crowd. The air crackles with a comfortable energy as they chat between sips of their cocktails. TRISTAN leans in, captivated by VIVIENNE'S animated story about a disastrous first date.

VIVIENNE

(brightly smiling)

...and then the dog just snatched the entire sandwich right out of my friend's hand! Can you believe the audacity?

TRISTAN

(laughs)

That sounds like something my dog, Max, would do. He's a total food bandit.

VIVIENNE

See? There you go! We have things in common beyond just enjoying overly complicated board games.

They fall into a comfortable silence, their eyes lingering on each other. TRISTAN reaches out, his fingers brushing against VIVIENNE'S hand. A spark ignites between them, sending a delicious shiver down her spine. A slow smile spreads across VIVIENNE'S face, but it doesn't quite reach her eyes.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)

(suddenly grows quiet)

Tristan, this... this is all really nice.

TRISTAN

(holding her hand tightly)

It is, isn't it? Like things are just... clicking.

VIVIENNE stares into her drink, a shadow clouding her previously carefree expression. A battle rages within her.

She wants to enjoy this moment, wants to allow herself to believe in the possibility of something real with TRISTAN. But a familiar voice, a voice laced with self-doubt, whispers in the back of her mind. It's a voice she's known all too well, a voice that has sabotaged countless opportunities for genuine connection in the past.

VIVIENNE

(takes deep breath)

The thing is... I've been thinking a lot lately.

(pauses)

About where I'm at in life, what I want... and well...

She hesitates, her gaze flickering away from him. The air thickens with unspoken words. TRISTAN'S smile falters, a flicker of apprehension crossing his features. He's felt this before, this gut-wrenching feeling of things being too good to be true.

TRISTAN

(worried)

What is it, Viv? You can tell me anything.

VIVIENNE

(eyes turn away)

It's not you, okay? It's me. I... I am just not right for you.

VIVIENNE'S confession hangs in the air, heavy and raw. Shame creeps into her voice, a reflection of the countless times she's repeated this pattern, leaving a trail of short-lived connections and lingering regrets.

TRISTAN

(reaches out for her hand)

Hey, look at me. It's okay to be scared, to be unsure. But just because things are going well doesn't mean they have to end badly. Let's just see where things take us, alright?

TRISTAN'S words are laced with hope, a genuine desire to nurture what they've built together. He understands fear, the hesitation that comes with opening your heart to someone new. But for the first time in a long time, he allows himself to believe that maybe, just maybe, things could be different.

VIVIENNE longs to believe him. To silence the voice whispering about inevitable heartbreak. But the fear, the self-preservation ingrained in her, rears its ugly head.

She's built walls around her heart, thick walls of past disappointments and a crippling fear of intimacy. Tearing them down feels terrifying.

VIVIENNE
(tears running down)
I can't. I just... I can't do this
right now. Not with you, not with
anyone.

TRISTAN'S face falls as he absorbs her words. Disappointment washes over him, a bitter echo of past rejections. Yet, beneath the surface, there's a flicker of something deeper - a weariness, a growing acceptance of the cyclical nature of his relationships.

FADE IN:

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK - EVENING

The sun dips towards the horizon, casting long shadows across the bustling Brooklyn Bridge Park. TRISTAN and VIVIENNE stroll hand-in-hand, their laughter weaving through the music of a nearby street performer. The air smells like summer - freshly cut grass and blooming wildflowers.

VIVIENNE
(playfully grinning)
Close your eyes, birthday dude!

TRISTAN throws her a playful look.

TRISTAN
Secret squirrel, huh? Alright,
alright. But if it's another one of
your impossible frisbee trick
shots, I swear...

He closes his eyes with a playful grin. VIVIENNE shuffles behind him, a mischievous twinkle in her eyes. A beat later, she whispers, "Alright, open!"

TRISTAN opens his eyes, and a surprised laugh escapes his lips. There, in her hand, sits a cupcake with a single candle flickering on top. The sweet aroma of chocolate and vanilla hits him.

TRISTAN is speechless for a moment.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)
Whoa, Vivienne. You remembered?

VIVIENNE beams, a touch of pride coloring her cheeks.

VIVIENNE

Duh! How could I forget the most epic birthday of the year?

TRISTAN feels a warmth spread through him. It wasn't just the cupcake; it was the effort, the fact that she remembered. He takes the cupcake gingerly, their fingers brushing in the process. A spark jumps between them, sending a delicious shiver down his spine.

TRISTAN

(voice heavy with emotion)

This is... awesome. Seriously, thanks, Viv. You have no idea how much this means to me.

VIVIENNE

(playfully punching his arm)

Oh come on, drama king. It's just a cupcake.

TRISTAN

It's more than that, Viv. It's perfect. Like you knew exactly what I needed.

His words linger in the air, carrying a hint of something unspoken. Vivienne notices the intensity in his eyes, something she hasn't quite seen before. It sends a flicker of uncertainty through her. Was she moving too fast?

VIVIENNE

(laughing to ease the tension)

Alright, alright, birthday boy. Hold still. Classic birthday rules - first bite goes to the one who remembers.

VIVIENNE scoops a dollop of frosting and brings it to his lips. TRISTAN leans in, their faces mere inches apart. The playful atmosphere shifts, a sudden undercurrent of something more weaving between them.

VIVIENNE pulls back, leaving a sweet kiss of frosting on his lips. TRISTAN'S eyes hold a depth of emotion that sends shivers down her own spine. He swallows the frosting, the sweetness mirroring the rush of feelings coursing through him.

He wants to take things further, to tell VIVIENNE how this gesture feels like a declaration, a small but significant step towards something more.

TRISTAN takes it, savoring the sweetness on his tongue and the unspoken yearning in his heart. He knows this might be his own overactive imagination, but for now, he allows himself to enjoy VIVIENNE'S thoughtfulness.

He can't help but indulge in the possibility that maybe, his interpretation isn't entirely off the mark. The cupcake, a simple gesture in most people's eyes, becomes a turning point in Tristan's mind. It fuels a budding hope, a desire to explore the connection he feels with VIVIENNE.

TRISTAN (V.O.)

Maybe... this is a sign. Maybe Vivienne feels something too. It's a long shot, but seeing the effort she put into this tiny gesture... it makes me want to believe. But what if I misread it? What if it's just a cupcake, and I'm making a fool of myself?

TRISTAN steals another glance at Vivienne. Her eyes sparkle with amusement, completely unaware of the storm of emotions he's battling within. He takes a deep breath, knowing he can't scare her off by being too forward.

TRISTAN

(smiling)

So, what's the plan for the rest of the evening? Movie night at my place? Or you pick the spot, birthday girl gets to choose?

VIVIENNE

Movie night sounds awesome!
(grabs his hand)

The two slowly walk down the sidewalk. TRISTAN visibly showing his sadness and VIVIENNE visibly down.

EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE - NIGHT - COUPLE OF DAYS LATER

We see the pair walking around, navigating on their phones. Arriving at their location is a restaurant with a horror themed decor. Going up two flights of stairs.

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE - NIGHT

Fog rolls across the dimly lit floor, obscuring the path ahead. Screams pierce the air, punctuated by the cackle of unseen monsters. TRISTAN and VIVIENNE stand at the entrance, a mix of nervous excitement etched on their faces.

TRISTAN
 (heart pounding)
 Alright, Viv. Ready to face your
 deepest fears?

VIVIENNE
 (stalling, focusing on
 breathing)
 Think we can avoid the jump scares?
 I'm a total sucker for them.

TRISTAN
 (laughing)
 Don't worry, I'll be here to shield
 you. Then again, I do have a
 tendency to be a tad jumpy.

They step into the first room, greeted by a decrepit living room complete with dusty furniture and cobwebs draped like macabre curtains. A flickering, skeletal hand shoots out from behind a rocking chair, snapping its bony fingers. VIVIENNE jumps, burying her face in TRISTAN'S arm.

VIVIENNE
 (muffled giggle)
 See! Told you!

TRISTAN
 (smiling heroically)
 Fear not, damsel in distress! I've
 vanquished the skeletal foe.

He pulls her hand playfully, leading her through the haunted maze. They weave past animated zombies, a haunted bookcase groaning with spectral whispers, and a hallway filled with creepy crawlies that erupt from the walls. VIVIENNE shrieks and laughs in equal measure, clinging to TRISTAN'S arm for comfort. Yet these attractions are not working towards the pair.

VIVIENNE
 (laughing in between mini
 screams)
 You know, I have to give it to
 them, the special effects are
 pretty good! Even though it's kind
 of a bore.
 (chuckles)

TRISTAN
 Totally agree. I'm just screaming
 before we make a turn and I'm still
 not impressed.
 (laughs)
 (MORE)

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Though, I have to say, classic Universal Studios monsters still reign supreme in my book. Dracula, Frankenstein, the Wolfman - they never go out of style.

VIVIENNE

Oh, absolutely! But I have a soft spot for more contemporary horror. Psychological thrillers, you know? The ones that mess with your mind after the credits roll?

TRISTAN

(fascinated)

Ooh, interesting. Any recommendations?

They continue navigating the haunted house, their conversation shifting towards favorite horror movies, dissecting plot twists and discussing the evolution of the genre. They discover a shared love for John Carpenter's classics and a healthy debate ensues over the merits of slashers versus psychological horror.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

(smiling, scared, but having fun)

That was terrifyingly fun! Can you believe it was 10 minutes longer?! Next time we should go to a better one.

(chuckling)

VIVIENNE

(smacking his arm playfully)

Don't blame me if you have nightmares tonight!

TRISTAN

If I do, at least I'll have a brave companion to fight them with.

VIVIENNE laughing then moment turns to silence.

VIVIENNE

(checks watch)

Well, it's getting late.

TRISTAN

Wanna get a drink and stroll around?

VIVIENNE
(reluctant)
I don't know... maybe just one?

TRISTAN
Okay, let's go to an convenience
store then.

BROOKLYN BAR - THREE WEEKS LATER

INT. TRISTAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The glow of the cityscape filters through the windows, casting a soft light on TRISTAN'S apartment. Soft music plays in the background as VIVIENNE finishes a sip of wine. An awkward silence hangs between them.

TRISTAN
(clearing his throat)
So... that was some movie marathon,
huh?

VIVIENNE
(smiling)
It definitely was. That animated
comedy you picked was hilarious!

TRISTAN
(grinning)
Glad you liked it. It always cheers
me up.

The silence returns, this time heavier, laced with unspoken tension. TRISTAN walks towards VIVIENNE, hesitantly reaching out to tuck a stray curl behind her ear.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)
(voice softens)
Vivienne, there's something I want
to say.

VIVIENNE'S smile falters, a flicker of apprehension crossing her features.

VIVIENNE
(takes a deep breath)
Okay. What is it?

TRISTAN

(looks into her eyes)
 These past few weeks with you...
 they've been incredible. I haven't
 felt this way about someone in a
 long time. Like, really connected.

A blush creeps up VIVIENNE'S neck. His words echo a sentiment she feels deep down, but a voice of self-preservation whispers warnings in her ear.

VIVIENNE

(voice trembles slightly)
 Tristan, I... I feel that too.
 You're amazing, kind, funny...

TRISTAN

(leans closer)
 Vivienne...

He reaches out, his hand hovering just shy of hers. VIVIENNE'S breath catches in her throat. Her heart thrums a frantic rhythm against her ribs, a stark contrast to the calming melody playing in the background.

VIVIENNE

(eyes glistening)
 Tristan, this... it can't happen.

Her voice, barely a whisper, cracks on the last word. The hand that hovered over hers remains suspended, a silent question mark.

TRISTAN

(confusion clouding him)
 Can't happen? What do you mean?

VIVIENNE

(tear running down her
 cheek)
 I care about you, truly. But...
 there's a part of me, a broken
 part, that keeps sabotaging good
 things.

She looks away, ashamed of the self-destructive voice that controls her actions.

TRISTAN

(gently takes her hand)
 Hey, look at me. You can tell me
 anything.

VIVIENNE hesitates, then takes a deep breath.

VIVIENNE

(voice choked with
emotion)

I have a pattern. I rush into things, build connections, and then, just when things start getting serious, I push them away. It's like I'm afraid of getting hurt, or hurting someone else.

TRISTAN

(squeezing her hand)

But that doesn't have to be you and me, Vivienne. We can take things slow, be honest with each other...

VIVIENNE

(shaking her head)

No, Tristan. You deserve someone who can wholeheartedly give themselves to you. Someone who doesn't have this baggage.

TRISTAN

(frustration battling with
confusion)

But what if I don't mind the baggage? What if I want to help you unpack it?

VIVIENNE

(tears welling up again)

You're too good for that, Tristan. You deserve a clean slate, a love story without complication. I can't offer you that.

The anguish in her voice is raw and undeniable. TRISTAN sees the pain beneath her surface, the fear that holds her back. A bittersweet understanding washes over him.

TRISTAN

(voices thicken with
emotion)

Vivienne, if what we have is worth it, we'll figure it out together. But if you're truly convinced...

He pauses, swallowing back the lump in his throat.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

...then maybe you're right. Maybe this isn't the right time for us.

A heavy silence lingers in the air. VIVIENNE leans in, tears streaming down her face, and kisses him softly. It's a bittersweet goodbye, a culmination of unspoken feelings and a heartbreaking understanding.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - TWO WEEKS LATER

The credits rolled, their cheerful music a jarring contrast to the heavy silence that had settled between TRISTAN and VIVIENNE as they exited the theater. The vibrant summer night had lost its luster, the laughter of the dispersing crowd a mocking reminder of the joy they couldn't quite grasp.

TRISTAN
(voice strained)
So, that was... something.

VIVIENNE
(tight smile, flicker of
sadness in her eyes,
whispering)
Something?

TRISTAN
Well, an experience, to say the
least.
(frustration in his voice)
I was hoping for this something a
little less awkward.

VIVIENNE
(sighs, tucks a strand of
hair behind her ear)
Me too, Tristan. Me too.

They walked in silence for a couple of minutes, the sidewalk stretching out before them like a path leading nowhere. TRISTAN stole a glance at VIVIENNE, her profile illuminated by the soft glow of a streetlamp. He felt a surge of protectiveness wash over him, a desperate need to bridge the growing chasm between them.

TRISTAN
(low-toned voice)
Vivienne... we can't just pretend
nothing happened back there.

VIVIENNE
Back there? Where? In the theater?

TRISTAN
Kinda. This awkwardness and back at
my apartment couple weeks ago.
(MORE)

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

(hheart pounding)

The way we were before... we
couldn't keep it going?

VIVIENNE

Tristan, that was a beautiful
mistake. But a mistake nonetheless.

TRISTAN

(disbelief)

A mistake? But Vivienne we were
connecting! It felt real, didn't
it?

VIVIENNE stopped walking, turning to face him. Her eyes,
usually sparkling with mischief, were now clouded with a deep
sadness.

VIVIENNE

Tristan, listen to me. What we have
it's special, I know that. But
there are two kinds of love, okay?
There's the kind you see in the
movies, the all-consuming, happily-
ever-after kind. And then there's
the kind I know, the kind that
burns bright for a moment and
then...

She trailed off, her voice thick with unshed tears.

TRISTAN

And then?

VIVIENNE

And then it leaves you with nothing
but ashes.

(tears flowing down her
face)

That's the kind of love I'm capable
of giving right now, Tristan. A
fleeting flame that will only leave
you burned.

TRISTAN

I don't get it, Viv. What are you
trying to say? That when you're in
love, you destroy it?

VIVIENNE

No, I'm saying that I love the
person you are, but I don't love
you.

TRISTAN

(disheartened)

Oh, I see... but maybe you're just saying that because you've found the right person--

VIVIENNE

(cutting him off)

Don't you see, Tristan? You deserve someone who can give you that wholehearted, forever kind of love. Someone who isn't afraid to fall, someone who isn't me.

TRISTAN stared at her, his hopes crumbling around him like sandcastles under a crashing wave. He understood her words, the fear resonating deep within them. But a stubborn part of him refused to believe it.

TRISTAN

Vivienne...

(reaches out to take her hand)

We can work through this. We can figure this out together.

VIVIENNE looked down at their intertwined hands, a flicker of longing crossing her face before it was replaced with a resolute expression.

VIVIENNE

No, Tristan. We can't. Because right now I'm not looking for 'together.' I'm not looking for commitment, or promises, or forever. I'm just Vivienne, the girl who builds walls around her heart.

TRISTAN

Do not run away from something real. For the first time you've been treated kindly and you want out?

Tristan felt a cold dread pool in his stomach. Her words hung in the air, a painful truth that shattered the fragile hope he had clung to. He understood her, understood the fear that held her back. But a part of him, a foolishly optimistic part, still clung to the notion that their connection was something more.

VIVIENNE

I want out because I don't want this! This has been too much for me.

TRISTAN

But what if...

VIVIENNE squeezed his hand gently, her touch a bittersweet farewell.

VIVIENNE

(she softly interrupts him)

Don't. Don't try to change me, Tristan. Don't try and fit me into a mold that I don't belong in. You deserve more than that, and so do I.

The weight of her words settled on TRISTAN'S shoulders. He looked into her eyes, searching for a flicker of something, anything, to suggest she might reconsider. But all he saw was a reflection of his own heartbreak mirrored in her sadness.

The air hung heavy between them, thick with unspoken emotions. A lone tear escaped VIVIENNE'S eye, tracing a glistening path down her cheek. As she wiped it away, a small, sad smile bloomed on her lips.

TRISTAN

(stammering)

I'm... sorry. I didn't realize I was doing this to you.

VIVIENNE

Thank you, Tristan. Thank you for everything.

TRISTAN walks down a deserted street, his head down. The city lights cast long, distorted shadows.

A flashback to VIVIENNE walking away. TRISTAN's face contorts with pain. A tear rolls down his cheek, but he quickly wipes it away.

Back to the present. TRISTAN stops and looks up at the sky. His eyes are filled with a mix of anger and sadness.

A montage of their happier times flashes before his eyes. The memories are bittersweet.

TRISTAN continues walking, his footsteps echoing in the quiet street. The image of VIVIENNE fades into the background.

He reaches a corner and turns. As he walks away, the city lights begin to fade.

TRISTAN stops and looks back over his shoulder. A single tear rolls down his cheek. He knows he has lost a part of himself, but he also knows he has gained something valuable: a deeper understanding of love and a renewed sense of hope.

INT. OFFICE - EARLY AFTERNOON - TWO MONTHS LATER

TRISTAN, sitting on an standard black chair, scrolling on his phone. Sends text to VIVIENNE:

TRISTAN (TEXT)
Hey Vivienne! Been a while, was
wondering if you'd like to meet and
catch up?

We see the PHONE'S SCREEN in full. A text message appears.

VIVIENNE (TEXT)
Hey, I'm sorry. I'm seeing someone
new, we can't meet anymore.

A tear drops onto his phone.

TRISTAN
(lightly chuckles, then
loudly laughing
briefly)
Wow, nice.

From behind, the CAMERA PANS AROUND to get a CLOSE UP of

TRISTAN.

THE END