

RIVERDALE

DEATH OF A CHEERLEADER



An original novel by Micol Ostow

SCHOLASTIC INC.

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CHAPTER ONE



RIVW WEATHER

1 min. ago

A severe weather advisory is in effect for Riverdale and the surrounding townships from now through Sunday evening. Meteorologists are predicting heavy rains and gale-force winds, with the possibility of flash floods arising quickly. Please tune in for ongoing coverage and further updates. We care about your safety!

—RIVW.com and affiliates



Veronica:

Good morning, Archiekins! How's my favorite early bird?

Archie:

Hey, Ronnie! I'm OK. Tired. I was up late cleaning up at the community center.

Veronica:

Those kids are so lucky to have you.

Archie:

I guess . . . I just wish I could do more.

Archie:

Sorry, I'm being a downer. Long story short:
I'm good. So, what's up?

Veronica:

My stalwart Red Paladin. I hope you know
it's OK if you're not good.

Veronica:

You've had a time of it. And you can and
should be processing in your own way, on
your own schedule. You needn't put on a
brave face for me.

Archie:

I know, Ronnie. You've been amazing
since everything with my dad. You have
no idea how much I appreciate it.

Veronica:

Well, as you said yourself: I only wish
I could do more.

Veronica:

In the meantime, though, woefully
inadequate though it may be, I do have
a suggestion, hopefully more appealing
than catching the proverbial worm.

Veronica:

I'm meeting Betty at Pop's for a little pre-school day sustenance. How about you come, too? I know she'd love to see you. Plus, it's been too long since we just kicked back like regular high schoolers enjoying some much-earned senioritis.

Archie:

Yeah, I guess it has. And I wish I could. It would be nice to feel normal again.

Veronica:

But you're busy?

Archie:

I am, yeah.

Veronica:

Surely the community center is immaculate?

Archie:

It is, but there are a million other things I need to take care of there. You know how it is, you've got La Bonne Nuit.

Archie:

And with Dad gone . . . I'm trying to keep an eye on Andrews Construction, too—all the lumber deliveries and stuff. Just, you know, until we find someone to take over the logistics for the construction crew. And there are a ton of deliveries this morning.

Veronica:

Got it. I do know how it goes. And, obvi, I think you're amazing for keeping the community center AND the construction business running smoothly. I know your dad would be so proud of you. Just like I am.

Archie:

I hope so. I mean, I'm trying.

Veronica:

You're SUCCEEDING, Archie. I repeat: You. Are. AMAZING.

Veronica:

But you don't have to be amazing all on your own. Is there ANYTHING I can do to help? I'm pretty great at logistics, if I do say so myself. Let me lighten your load. Isn't that what best girls are for?

Veronica:

It'd be a true shame if we let all my Pop's and La Bonne Nuit management experience go to waste . . .

Archie:

No!

Archie:

I mean, yes, you're super experienced. And that's so sweet. YOU are amazing, too, of course. But I'm good.

Veronica:

You've got a support system, Archiekins. People who are here for you, who WANT you to lean on them.

Archie:

I know. But my mom is on top of everything right now. All the manager stuff. So I don't need to burden you with any of that.

Veronica:

It's not a burden, Archie. Don't ever think that. I'm here, anytime, day or night. Just say the word and let me know if—and when—there's ANYTHING I can do.

Archie:

I will. And thanks. But you really don't have to worry about me, Ronnie. I swear.

Veronica:

I can't help it, Archie. But I'll take you at your word.

Archie:

Cool. Well . . . I guess I'll see you at school?

Veronica:

Absolutely. 😊



BETTY

Of all the drama unfolding in Riverdale of late, you could probably argue that relationship stuff fell pretty low on the priority list. Jughead and I doing the long-distance thing? That paled in comparison to the revelations that—oh, just as a fun for instance—*my own mother* had been a sleeper agent working with the FBI to take down an organ-harvesting cult . . . And that my long-lost (then found, then lost *again*) half