

## VICTOR by Danny Hoch

[A young man on permanent steel crutches saunters up to a young woman in the waiting lobby of the Albert Einstein Hospital College Of Medicine, Bronx, New York.]

Excuse me. Hello. ..Hello? Hi. What's your name? ...Oh, my name's Victor. Nice to meet you. So, what are you doing here? Oh, wait, lemme guess. You're visiting you're grandfather. ...Oh I was close though right? She's sick? Oh, I'm sorry. You're very pretty you know that? I mean that you don't seem like the type that you just be chilling in hospitals. You know, I'm not here all the time. I mean it's not like I be hangin' out here. I just gotta see the doctors for a while like this week and next week cause complications.. well not really complications, but like ..Nah, somebody had shot me like two years ago, it was a complicated, it was a accident. ...Tsa ha, don't worry, you didn't shoot me right?

So, you live around here? You sure? I'm saying though, I seen this really pretty girl in 149th Street and I thought it was you, but that wasn't you?.. Oh aight, I'm just makin sure. You want me to go talk to the guard, and see if he could get you in quicker? Cause I know him. Cause I have to come here every week, not every week, but sometimes, for like rehabilitation, I mean not rehabilitation like I'm a drug addict or some shit like that. But for like, therapy. I mean not like therapy like I'm crazy or some shit like that. But for physical therapy, you know.

..Nah, I'm not really supposed to talk about it. My mother don't like me to. Not like I do everything my mother tells me, but... Nah..aight. It was two years ago, and I was hanging outside my house, and my friends came by and ask me if I wanna go for a ride, so I got in the car, but I didn't know it was stolen, I mean I had a feeling, but I wasn't sure, I mean you never know, I mean my friend he could have just bought it, but he didn't, but you know, and we drove one block, and the cops stopped us, and they made us get out, and I don't really know what happened. Like, my friend had moved and I guess this one cop thought that my friend had a gun, and he had just ..panicked or something, I don't know, so he had just started shooting at the car, but I can't really talk about it. They said it was a accident. But I don't know. ..Nah, I mean I was reading in the New York Post, and they were talking about like 12 different ways why it could have been a accident, ..No, yeah I was there but, I mean, I got shot, but the more I read about it, the more I think it might have been a accident.

Damn, you got a nice smile. Where are you from? Staten Island? Yeah but I mean you speak Spanish? You're Dominican right? ..But you're Dominican? ..Czechoslovakia? Damn. I'm kinda off, right? Czechoslovakia, that's near Germany right? ..Oh but it's close though right? I know that cause I look at maps a lot. I got maps all over my walls, like in my room. I put them up. I don't know why, I'm just into it. I just like to look at like different places or whatever. ..So, what they eat over there, like cheese? ..Oh, you never been there? Oh, my bad. ..So, you go to school? ..Ah see, I could tell, cause you got that look. I'm not saying you look stupid, like a nerd. I'm saying, you look smart. Like you definitely got plans for your future, like you're on a mission. That's good. What you study? ..Oh yeah? That's good. We need more businesspeople.

Me personally, I would like to go into the Air Force, I mean if they let me, I heard it's still possible. Cause I would like to protect this country from like evil dictators. Like Saddam

Hussein and Fidel Castro. ..Yeah, cause like people don't realize, that this is the greatest country in the world, you know? ..Yeah, cause like, you never know, in other places, people could just be savages or whatever, or the government will just shoot you cause they don't like you. At least here we got democracy, and everybody's protected. ..Right right. But mostly, I would like to be able to fly like a F-15, or a Stealth bomber, cause then I would get to just fly over all those places in the maps. ..Nah I wouldn't stop nowhere. I would just fly over, you know, look at it ..maybe drop a few bombs or whatever.

So, you watch TV? You like Seinfeld? Oh, that's my favorite show. Yup. Last week, they had this Mexican guy in it. He wasn't Mexican, but he was playing like he was Mexican, but, it was funny. ..Damn, they make you wait a long time out here right, just to visit somebody. You sure you don't want me to ask the guard, and see if he could let you go upstairs? You sure? ..Oh aight. I'm just making sure. ..Right ..So ..Would you like to go out with me sometime? I mean, I ain't Tom Cruise or nothing, but, I'm Puertorican. You know what they say about Puertoricans right? We're good dancers. For real. You didn't watch in the Discovery Channel Entertainment Report? They discovered us. They did a whole thing that said Puertoricans are the best dancers in the world. I mean, they didn't say it, but that's what they were saying, you know. I bet you like to go dancing right? You like to go to clubs in Manhattan? What music you like? I could dance to anything. House, Hip-Hop, Salsa, Merengue, Classical, whatever.

You don't think I could dance right? I could dance. I been practicing for the past two years. Besides, they said in the Discovery Channel that it doesn't matter, as long as you're Puertorican. You and me could dance right here, to practice. It's nobody looking. ..It's nobody looking though. [She walks away] ..Oh aight, nah that's aight I understand. Yeah. ...Aight, well, tell her I hope she feels better, all right? ..Goodbye. ..It's nice meeting you. It's the fourth floor. ..Push the button. ..You're very pretty.