

Black Swan

by

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OPENING CREDITS:

A SPOTLIGHT slices black space.

In its beam, a DANCER in a white dress materializes. She is fair-skinned. Beautiful and pure.

She twirls on pointe, a smile on her face, light as air and carefree.

Suddenly, her face grows worried. Sensing someone watching.

Scared, she peers into the darkness.

She moves now, looking, growing more frantic.

But she can't see anything. She pauses, relaxes. Convincing herself it was just her imagination...

Then, a SINISTER MAN emerges out of the darkness behind her. She stumbles backwards, frightened.

She tries to escape, twirling away, but he pursues.

He flings his open hand towards her, casting the spell.

She wants to scream, but nothing comes out. She looks at her body, sensing something happening to her. Something terrifying.

She spins, panicking, clawing at her body with her hands, trying to stop it. But it's too late.

As she turns, she morphs into the WHITE SWAN, the iconic protagonist of SWAN LAKE.

CUT TO BLACK.

In the darkness, a pair of EYES emerge. They belong to NINA, the same dancer. She lies awake in bed, thinking about her dream.

The door opens, throwing LIGHT on her face. Nina looks towards the door and smiles softly at whoever opened it.

Nina sits up and hangs her BARE FEET off the side of the bed. Like all ballerinas, she's beautiful and her feet are atrocious. Covered in corns, broken blisters and bunions. She arches them, doing her first extensions of the day.

3 INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

3

The room is empty of furniture to leave space for dancing. A large mirror covers the opposite wall entirely.

Nina rubs her knees to get them warm, and then begins her morning exercises, extending and contracting her feet and legs in precise and rhythmic motions.

She is very thin, even for a ballerina. The skin on her chest stretches tautly over her sternum. Defined vertebrae run up her back, sinewy muscles contract as she moves. Her slender neck leads into her hair, contained in a ballerina's bun.

Nina is completely focused as she moves, obsessed with doing everything correctly, quietly counting out the beats.

She hears someone fussing about in the kitchen.

NINA

(while stretching)

Had the most amazing dream last night. I was dancing the White Swan.

No answer.

NINA (CONT'D)

Different choreography, like the Bolshoi's. It was the prologue, when Rothbart casts his spell.

Still no answer.

Nina continues to stretch.

4 INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

4

Nina sits at the table, a HALF-GRAPEFRUIT placed in front of her, and a neatly arranged row of VITAMINS beside it.

NINA

He promised to feature me more this season.

Nina looks over to an older woman, ERICA, busy washing dishes. Her hair likewise in a bun.

ERICA

Well, darling, you know I believe in you.

Mildly discouraged, Nina swallows the pills one-by-one.

Erica walks over with a SWEATSHIRT and holds it above her. Nina pulls it over her head and starts to push her arms through the sleeves.

ERICA (CONT'D)
(noticing something)
What's that?

NINA
What?

ERICA
There.

Erica points to her shoulder. Nina feels and finds a small SCRATCH MARK.

She shrugs and shakes her head.

Erica gives her a suspicious look, but lets it go and smiles. Nina finishes pulling down the sweatshirt.

Erica hugs Nina into her chest and kisses the top of her head.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Sweet girl.

Erica releases her and Nina begins eating.

5 INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - DAY

5

Nina rides inside a crowded subway, staring absentmindedly at her faint reflection in the train's window.

Suddenly, another train roars by on the opposite track, snapping her awake.

In the next train car, she sees the back of a BALLERINA standing in the midst of the crowd. Her head bops to music playing through iPod earphones.

Nina moves a strand of hair out of her eyes, and at that exact moment, the girl in the next car moves in the same way. Mirroring her.

Unnerved, Nina slowly lowers her arm. So does the other girl. Although Nina can't quite see her face, the girl seems IDENTICAL from Nina's vantage point.

The train jerks to a stop as it arrives at a station. Some people exit. Nina watches the girl find a seat. Nina cranes to see her face but it's still turned away.

Then, Nina realizes it's her stop. She rushes for the door. It jams shut on her. But she squeezes through.

6 INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM- SAME 6

The train starts to pull out. Nina looks back to see the other girl but the car has moved too far away.

7 EXT. LINCOLN CENTER - DAY 7

Nina emerges from the subway station onto a city street.

She arrives at the MAJESTIC-LOOKING THEATER, where a few other BALLERINAS likewise trickle towards the entrance. They all look strangely similar: slender, carrying shoulder bags, wearing leggings and loose sweatshirts.

She nears the backstage entrance, and she sees a motley crew of BALLET FANS assembled around the star of the company, BETH, clamoring for her autograph.

A couple fans glance at Nina as she approaches, but could care less. They turn their attention back to Beth.

Dismayed, Nina enters.

8 INT. SOLOIST DRESSING ROOM - DAY 8

Crammed into a single dressing room, Nina and the company's 5 SOLOISTS get ready for rehearsal. Chatting, sewing ribbon onto shoes, applying makeup, putting band-aids on blisters.

Nina removes a new pair of BALLET SHOES and cuts off the satin toe with scissors.

In the background, catty VERONICA and Russian GALINA gossip.

VERONICA
Company's broke.

GALINA
It's always broke.

VERONICA
I mean, *really* broke. No one comes to see her anymore.

SOLOIST 1

No one comes to see ballet period.

GALINA

That's not true, I heard the Royal had one of their best seasons yet.

SOLOIST 1

That's *Europe*.

VERONICA

I know, I'm just saying, it's time for something new.

GALINA

Someone new.

VERONICA

Yeah, like someone who's not approaching menopause.

They snicker.

NINA

I think it's sad.

VERONICA

What's sad?

NINA

Beth's such an amazing dancer.

GALINA

So's my grand-mother.

NINA

Ulanova danced into her 40's...

VERONICA

(rolling eyes)

Yeah, we know.

Irked, Nina starts POUNDING the shoes against the floor to soften the toe.

Her eyes are drawn to a NEW GIRL standing in the doorway. Nina pauses to scrutinize her. She wears vampy make-up, hair down. Dark and sexy. She pulls out her IPOD EARPHONES to talk.

NEW GIRL

Soloists?

Wary, the girls mumble mmm-hmm's and nod.

NEW GIRL (CONT'D)

Great.

She slinks past the suspicious group of girls and plops down at an open spot.

NEW GIRL (CONT'D)

Fucking missed the train stop and had to hoof it from 59th.

Nina exchanges glances with the other girls, taken aback.

The new girl notices the looks, smirks to herself and starts getting ready.

9

INT. LARGE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

9

Nina wears a look of intense concentration as the entire company warms up, including the pubescent CORPS MEMBERS and a handful of MALE DANCERS.

LEGS, HANDS, and FEET repeat the same movements all around her, led by a severe BALLET MISTRESS.

BALLET MISTRESS

To the back, fondu, to the back, plie. Fourth, fourth, and one and fifth, to the back...

(to a corp member)

Like this. Push it. You're not working hard enough.

Using the mirror, Nina monitors her movements carefully. The mistress surprises her.

BALLET MISTRESS (CONT'D)

Nina. It needs to be looser. Relax. Let it flow.

Flustered, Nina nods and tries to follow her instruction.

Suddenly, the girls around Nina begin stripping off their sweatshirts and insulated pants.

Nina sees that the intense and brooding director of the company, MICHAEL BRENNAN, has entered the space. He has the unkept look of an artist. Magnetic and intense.

The ballerinas remove their warm-up gear to show off their bodies.

Brennan walks around the room, judging his flock. Smiles and glances are thrown his way.

He goes up to the ballet mistress, takes her hand and kisses her on the cheek. Even she manages a smile.

He heads to the line of soloists, studying them.

BRENNAN

You know the story. Virginal young thing, pure and sweet, trapped in the body of a swan. Desperate for freedom, but only one thing can break the spell and return her to human form. Love, of course.

He taps a dancer on the shoulder, she lights up. He walks, then taps another. A selection process of some kind.

Nina looks nervous, has an inkling of what it means.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

And so she meets a man - as fortune would have it, a prince. She thinks, a little too soon perhaps, that it's her lucky day.

He nears Nina. She sneaks peeks at him, eager and hopeful.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Poor Odette...

He acknowledges her with a small nod and a smile.

But he walks on without tapping her. She deflates.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Because life is never really that simple, is it? Her dark twin, the Black Swan, seduces him. Alas, lust conquers love. He falls for her.

He approaches the New Girl. Nina watches, threatened.

But he doesn't tap her either.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Devastated and doomed, the White Swan leaps off a cliff, killing herself. But, in death, she finds freedom.

He taps one more soloist and then CLAPS.

The music stops and all the girls face him, attentive.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
 Good morning, company.

They respond "Good morning" in nervous, unsure voices.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
 We open our season with Swan Lake.
 Done to death, I know. But not like
 this. We strip it down. Make it
 visceral and real. And dangerous.
 No predictable Lake for us.

He pauses for effect.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
 And a new production needs a new
 Swan Queen. A fresh face to present
 to the world. But which of you can
 embody both swans? - white and
 black? Both sides of the coin?

Nina tenses, preparing for disappointment.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
 All the soloists I touched...

The girls he tapped smile and exchange glances, excited.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
 Please go to your usual classes
 this afternoon.

The girls are confused.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
 And the four I *didn't* touch, meet
 me in studio B at five.

Nina breathes, realizing the girls he didn't tap are the ones
 he's selected, purposefully toying with them.

10

INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - DAY

10

Behind a corner, Nina talks on her CELL PHONE.

NINA
 It's me. Call as soon as you get
 this. Okay, love you.

She hangs up and smiles to herself. She hears the sound of a
 CRASH, snapping her attention.

She comes out into the hall to investigate, sees the door to a PRINCIPAL DRESSING ROOM open halfway.

Inside, she can see Beth moving around the room in a fury, trashing it.

Suddenly, the door swings open and Beth bursts out.

She makes brief eye-contact with Nina.

BETH

What?!

Nina just shakes her head.

Beth scoffs as she slams the door behind her. She clips down the hall in the opposite direction.

Nina waits until she's gone, then moves closer to the door and peeks inside, curious.

She checks to make sure no one's around and quickly enters.

11 INT. PRINCIPALS' DRESSING ROOM- SAME 11

Large and comfortable. There's a SMALL LOVESEAT and a large WARDROBE CLOSET. PICTURES OF BETH adorn the mirror and wall.

Nina looks at herself in the mirror and smiles, imagining how great it would be...

Then she notices a LARGE VASE smashed on the floor, the flowers have been shredded, water everywhere.

Nina delicately steps over the broken glass to the counter.

She touches Beth's makeup, almost in reverence.

She picks up a tube of LIPSTICK and swirls it open.

Nina quickly slips the tube of LIPSTICK into her bag and exits the room.

12 INT. LARGE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY 12

In the middle of her audition, Nina dances Odette's Variation from Act II of the ballet, a frightened look on her face.

Although her movement is incredibly precise, there's a definite vulnerability. Exactly as the White Swan should be: fear tinged with melancholy.

Brennan waves his arm at the piano player. The music and Nina stop abruptly.

He approaches her and, when he gets close, taps on her sternum with two of his fingers.

BRENNAN

So Nina, would you like to be the Swan Queen?

NINA

If you want me to be.

BRENNAN

What kind of an answer is that?

NINA

You know I would.

BRENNAN

I do?

He leans in and talks softly so the other girls can't hear.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Well, that was brilliant. If I was just casting the White Swan, she'd be yours.

She can't help but smile, flattered. He pulls away from her.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

But there's also the Black Swan. Darker, lustful, the temptress. Can you do that?

She nods. He turns to the PIANO PLAYER.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Maestro, Odile's Coda.

The piano player rifles through the song book.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

(to Nina)

Show me your *Black Swan*, Nina.

Nervous, she glances over at Veronica and Galina, who anxiously await their turn.

She takes a few breaths, then looks towards the piano player and nods.

The music begins.

Nina dances a few steps, and then launches into the most difficult and famous part of Swan Lake: The Black Swan's Coda. It consists of 32 consecutive fouettes (spins).

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Not so controlled, let it out.

The music builds in intensity, she pushes herself into the next turn.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Seduce us! Not just the Prince, but the court, the audience, the entire fucking world! The fouettes are like a spider spinning her web. Come on! Explode! This isn't a school play, it isn't church. No, no...

He runs his hand through his hair, frustrated.

A look of worry spreads across Nina's face. Knows she's blowing it.

The door CLANGS open and throws Nina's focus completely. She stumbles, several spins short of finishing.

The New Girl marches into the room.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

(sarcastic)

Good of you to join us.

NEW GIRL

(shrugging)

Sorry.

BRENNAN

Girls, this is Lily. Straight off the plane from San Francisco. She's filling Rebecca's old spot.

LILY gives a small wave. Nina eyes her with scorn as she catches her breath.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Go on, get warmed up. We haven't got all day.

LILY

I'm good.

Lily starts stripping off her layers, revealing her lithe body. On her back, two DARK WING TATTOOS.

NINA
Should I go again?

BRENNAN
(distracted by Lily)
I've seen enough. Thank you, Nina.

She looks down, getting his meaning.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Okay, Veronica. Your turn. The
White Swan's variation...

Furious, Nina marches out of the room.

13 INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY- SAME 13

The door to the practice room closes behind her. Nina paces back and forth, losing it. MUSIC begins playing.

She glances back through the glass window and sees Veronica spinning, a smile on her face.

BRENNAN (O.S.)
(muffled, through door)
Yes, Veronica. Good, good.

Nina's face tenses.

She hears the VOICES of dancers approaching, and bottles her anger in.

She clips down the hall, desperate to leave.

14 INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - NIGHT 14

Sulking, Nina stands on the very edge of the platform, staring down at the tracks.

Among the strewn garbage, she notices a brown paper bag, soaked with a reddish brown liquid.

Suspicious, she inches down the platform to get a better look inside, and sees a glimpse of a dead rat.

Grossed out, Nina takes a step back. BUMPING into an OVER-WEIGHT WOMAN with blood-shot eyes.

OVER-WEIGHT WOMAN
Watch where you're steppin'...

NINA

Excuse me.

OVER-WEIGHT WOMAN (CONT'D)

...fat little bitch.

The over-weight woman stares her down. Nina backs away.

She stands further down the platform, but when she looks over, she sees the over-weight woman still staring at her.

Scared, Nina exits the platform.

15 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

15

Nina walks home along a quiet side street. She clutches her jacket, for warmth and comfort.

Her CELL PHONE starts ringing. She digs it out of her bag and checks the CALLER ID: MOM. She silences it and puts it away.

Up ahead, she sees the sidewalk dead end at a construction site, and detour into an enclosed PASSAGEWAY beneath the scaffolding.

Nina slows, a little scared, but decides to push on.

The passageway is dark. The temporary lighting dim and flickering.

She walks quickly, trying to get to the other side.

She hears the sound of soft FOOTSTEPS approaching. She stops, and the other FOOTSTEPS stop.

She looks up and sees the faint outline of a SLENDER WOMAN standing there, almost ghostlike.

Nina starts walking again, keeping her head down, and the other woman continues as well.

As they pass each other, Nina glances at the woman's face and discovers...

The woman looks EXACTLY LIKE HER.

But the moment passes as the woman continues walking.

Nina stares after her, perturbed.

Her cell phone starts RINGING again, piercing the silence. Nina continues out, ignoring the phone.

16 INT. UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT - NIGHT

16

Nina enters and locks the deadbolt and chain-lock behind her. She turns and is startled to see Erica standing right there.

ERICA
(relieved)
For heaven's sake...

NINA
Something was wrong with the train,
so I walked.

Erica removes Nina's coat and subtly checks the pockets.

ERICA
You didn't answer your phone.

NINA
I didn't hear it.

Erica eyes Nina, sure she's not telling her something.

ERICA
What's wrong angel?

Erica hangs up her coat, turns and sees Nina tearing up.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Darling?

NINA
I messed up.

The tears start falling now.

Erica goes to her and wraps her in an embrace.

ERICA
Shhh, shhh, it's okay.

17 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

17

Nina sits on the floor, putting on a pair of point shoes. She finishes securing them, stands, and stretches.

She takes a breath and does a single spin, testing the waters.

Nina takes another couple breaths and spins again, then a double, then a triple. Each spin is punctuated by a sharp jab of her left foot into the floor.

THWACK, THWACK. THWACK.

She jabs her toe down, hard...

NINA

Ow!

She winces in pain and automatically grabs her foot.

ERICA (O.S.)

(from her bedroom)

Everything okay?

NINA

I'm fine!

Nina leans her back against the mirror and removes her shoe. Her big toenail has split, oozing blood.

Nina breathes through the pain and puts her shoe back on.

She reassumes the position, takes a couple breaths, and starts spinning again.

Her toe jabs into the floor. She winces a little with pain, but keeps pushing.

Her face grows more determined, focused. 20, 21, 22 spins....

She starts to look powerful, willing herself to succeed.

At the end of the 32nd spin, Nina jabs her foot down hard.

She's done it!

Nina looks at herself in the mirror, glazed in sweat, a slight smile of satisfaction.

18

INT. NINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

18

Nina sits on the edge of the bed, as Erica douses some GAUZE with PEROXIDE and dabs it on the split toenail. Nina reacts to the sting.

ERICA

Shhh. Almost done...You're working yourself too hard, sweetie. So like me.

Nina flinches slightly when she hears the comparison. Erica doesn't notice.

NINA
I came so close.

ERICA
I know.

NINA
If that girl hadn't barged in.

ERICA
I'm sure she didn't mean to.
Remember your first day? If I
hadn't taken you to each of your
classes, you would have been
completely lost.

Her words annoy Nina.

NINA
I should go talk to him. Tell him I
finished it.

ERICA
Don't you think he's made up his
mind already? He's always so sure
of himself.

Nina looks away, unconvinced. Erica joins her on the bed.

ERICA (CONT'D)
It's *alright*. No matter what. I'm
sure you'll get to dance the Pas de
Quatre again. That's such a
wonderful part. Or maybe he'll make
you a Big Swan. Either way, you'll
shine.

NINA
I know, mom.

Erica removes Nina's EARRINGS, then opens a JEWELRY BOX
sitting on the night stand and drops them inside. A TOY
BALLERINA spins to TINNY MUSIC.

Nina lays down and gets under the covers. Erica tucks her
in.

ERICA
Everything will be better in the
morning. It always is.

She strokes Nina's hair, humming along to the music.

Nina watches the ballerina spin and spin with a determined stare.

19 INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM - MORNING 19

Nina swirls open the tube of LIPSTICK she stole from Beth, and faces herself in the mirror.

She paints it on her lips and smacks them together, evening it out.

She checks her reflection and puckers, doing her best to look sexy. She nods, satisfied.

Then she remembers her mother, and her smile fades to worry.

20 EXT. UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT, FOYER - DAY 20

Nina readies to leave, Erica waits by the door to say goodbye. Nina keeps her head down, trying to hide her mouth under her scarf, But Erica notices.

ERICA

What's that?

Erica reaches her hand towards Nina's face. Nina flinches away.

NINA

Mom...

ERICA

Thought we agreed you wouldn't go talk to him.

Nina stares at her, defiant.

ERICA (CONT'D)

Especially not like that. You look cheap. What will he think?

Erica uses her thumb to wipe the lipstick off her lips. Nina lets her, silently fuming.

21 INT. SUBWAY - DAY 21

Nina grips the rail with one hand as the other re-applies the lipstick, using the side window as a mirror. The jerky motion of the train makes it difficult, but she manages.

22 INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY- DAY

22

Nina waits anxiously outside Brennan's office, losing her resolve.

She hears someone approach, looks up and sees Brennan coming down the hall.

She puts on a nervous smile. He doesn't reciprocate.

BRENNAN

Yes, Nina?

NINA

Do you have a minute?

He doesn't answer, just opens the door to the office and walks in.

BRENNAN (O.S.)

Come in.

She takes a breath and then follows.

23 INT. BRENNAN'S OFFICE- DAY

23

Nina closes the door and faces the cozy, dark space. Large couch, posters from the ballet on the wall--several featuring Beth.

Brennan lights a cigarette, quietly studying her and not making this easy. He takes a drag, and exhales.

NINA

If now's not a good time...

BRENNAN

Now's fine, what is it?

NINA

I just wanted to tell you, I practiced the coda last night, and I did it.

BRENNAN

How thrilling for you.

NINA

(thrown)
Well...

BRENNAN

Okay, Nina, listen, I honestly don't care about your technique, you should know that by now.

NINA

Yes, but-

BRENNAN

Anyway, I've already chosen Veronica, so...

He lifts his hands in the air, "there you go."

NINA

(devastated)

I see.

BRENNAN

I know I said I'd feature you more-

NINA

What did I do wrong?

BRENNAN

(amused)

Nothing. You never do anything wrong. Which is why I'm making you a Big Swan. Congratulations.

NINA

I'm sorry, I shouldn't have come.

She makes a move towards the door.

BRENNAN

That's it? You're not going to try and change my mind?

She looks back at him, uncertain.

Brennan nonchalantly stubs out his cigarette.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

You must have thought it was possible, coming to find me like this...

She shakes her head.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

You give up so easily. What a sad way to live a life. A *betrayal*.

He pauses, looks her up and down as if trying to decipher her.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Why did you come today? All dolled up?

For just a split second it looks like she might run out of the room. But she gathers herself.

NINA

I came to ask you to give me the part.

BRENNAN

Why should I give it to you?

She shrugs. He comes around his desk and approaches her.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Truth is, when I look at you, all I see is the White Swan. Yes, you're beautiful, restrained, glacial. Perfect casting. But the Black Swan...it's a hard fucking job to dance both.

NINA

I know.

BRENNAN

I don't want a prim little school-girl pretending to be sexy. That would be distasteful, don't you think?

NINA

I can be the Black Swan too.

BRENNAN

Really? She's a risk-taker. In four years I've never once seen you take any risks. In your dancing or otherwise.

NINA

I've never had the chance.

BRENNAN

And you'd like one now, is that what you're saying?

NINA

Yes.

Without warning, he walks forward and slowly plants a kiss on her mouth.

It lasts for a moment, but he suddenly jerks away.

BRENNAN

Ow! Fuck!

He touches his lip, stunned.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

You bit me.

She's too scared to respond.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

(amused)

I can't believe it. That fucking hurt.

He goes to the mirror to check for damage. He glances back at Nina.

NINA

(mumbled)

Sorry.

She quickly leaves, shell-shocked.

24

INT. LARGE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

24

The company stretch and go through their usual warm-up routine, a tension in the air. The casting decision still uncertain.

Nina touches her lips, thinking about the encounter. Then looks over at Veronica, knowing the good news in store. Veronica notices. Nina looks away.

VERONICA

(irked)

What?

Nina shakes her head.

A sudden energy sweeps the room, and she hears the sound of scuffling feet and whispering. "It's up." "She just posted it." "C'mon."

The dancers start exiting into the hallway. Veronica turns to follow.

NINA
Veronica?

Veronica turns around. It's hard, but Nina decides to be a good loser.

NINA (CONT'D)
Congratulations.

Nina subtly glances at the exiting girls and Veronica immediately gets it.

She excitedly pushes through the crowd of girls, wanting to see for herself.

Knowing the outcome already, Nina continues stretching in the deserted space, resigned to her fate. She finishes, grabs her belongings and walks out.

25 INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY- SAME 25

A crowd of dancers surround the bulletin board, jostling to get a look.

Nina starts walking down the hall in the opposite direction.

Behind her, she can hear a small commotion and then:

VERONICA (O.S.)
Why did you tell me that?

She turns and sees Veronica, her face flushed with anger.

VERONICA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Your idea of a sick joke?

NINA
(confused)
What?

VERONICA
Fuck you.

Veronica storms away.

The group of girls stares at Nina, making her very self-conscious.

Nina tentatively approaches the bulletin board, to see what Veronica's outburst was all about.

First a few, then more and more of the girls smile at her. They make room for her as she pushes through.

She finally gets to the CASTING NOTICE, finds "New Swan Queen" and underneath:

NINA SAYERS

Stunned, she turns around to face the mass of ballerinas.

She sees Lily eyeing her with a flat expression, which turns into a smile to mask her disappointment.

The other girls start congratulating and hugging Nina, some more sincerely than others.

26

INT. THEATER BATHROOM - DAY

26

Nina bursts in through the door and heads directly for one of the stalls.

She locks herself in for privacy and dials a number on her CELL PHONE. She holds it to her ear, anxiously waiting for the person to answer.

NINA

Hey...Everything's fine...He picked me, mommy.

She waits for a response.

NINA (CONT'D)

Did you hear me?...Yes, I'm going to be the Swan Queen.

Nina laughs at her mother's response and can't help but start crying.

NINA (CONT'D)

I'll be right home, okay? I just wanted to tell you.

Nina hangs up and the tears really start flowing. She's dreamt of this for so long, it's almost too much to bear.

She wipes the tears off with the back of her hand and pulls herself together. She comes out of the stall...

Horrified to discover "WHORE" written on the mirror in RED LIPSTICK.

Nina looks around the bathroom, to make sure she's alone.

She snags a paper towel and wipes off the insult, smearing the mirror with red streaks.

27 INT. UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT - AFTERNOON 27

Nina unlocks the door to the apartment.

NINA

Mom?

Nina looks around, puzzled she isn't there.

28 INT. ERICA'S BEDROOM - LATER 28

Nina opens the door and pokes her head in.

But Erica's not in there either. Nina glances at the walls.

They're covered with snapshots, programs with star-stickers next to Nina's name, newspaper and company pictures with Nina's face circled in marker. An obsessive catalogue of Nina's entire career.

Nina withdraws.

29 INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM - NIGHT 29

Post-shower, Nina's fuzzy reflection stares back in a steam covered mirror.

Nina takes her hand and wipes a streak across, to see herself more clearly.

She looks nervous. The enormity of what's in front of her setting in.

She turns side-to-side, scrutinizing her body. She lifts her arm and pinches the skin to check her weight.

She notices a small cluster of RED BUMPS on her shoulder. A small RASH.

She feels the bumps with her fingers, bothered.

She checks the same place on her other shoulder.

There's no rash, just faint streaks of SCAR TISSUE.

Nina slides the hamper in front of the door to block it.

In the mirror now, one of the bumps is bleeding.

Nina quickly wipes the blood off with her finger. But when she inspects it, she finds that the finger is clean, no blood.

She's confused, but the sound of the front door opening steals her attention.

30 INT. UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT- NIGHT 30

Nina exits the bathroom wearing a robe.

She sees her mother smiling anxiously, and next to her, a GIANT TEDDY BEAR IN A TUTU sits on the kitchen table.

Erica holds out her arms and Nina falls into a hug.

ERICA
My daughter, the Swan Queen.

Nina looks at the teddy bear, hiding her disdain.

NINA
Wow...

ERICA
You like her?

NINA
She's so big.

Erica snatches the bear and walks down the hallway. Nina reluctantly follows, her face showing irritation.

31 INT. NINA'S BEDROOM- NIGHT 31

Erica places the bear on Nina's bed, by the pillows. Erica stands back in admiration.

ERICA
What do you think?

NINA
Why don't we put her with all the others?

ERICA
Don't you want to cuddle with her?

Nina hesitates on her response.

ERICA (CONT'D)
(irked)
Fine.

Erica snatches the bear off the bed.

Erica opens Nina's closet, revealing a shelf full of similar STUFFED ANIMALS.

She hastily clears a spot at the center, knocking some of the other animals onto the floor.

NINA

Mom...

Erica places the latest addition.

Nina looks at her, feeling guilty. She picks up the bear and puts it back on her bed.

NINA (CONT'D)

You're right. She's cute.

She looks back at Erica. Erica gives her a weak smile.

ERICA

I'm just so proud of you.

32

INT. PRINCIPAL REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

32

First day in the new role, Nina stretches alone.

Muffled sounds of other ballerinas chatting and giggling drift in from the large rehearsal space. Makes Nina feel a little isolated.

DAVID (O.S.)

Hey there...

Nina turns and sees DAVID, the high-cheeked, cocky Russian playing Prince Siegfried.

DAVID (CONT'D)

It is so full, where do I stand.

It is his version of a joke. Nina politely laughs.

NINA

Yeah...good luck finding a spot.

DAVID

I am David.

NINA

I know you are. I'm Nina.

DAVID

Nice to meet you, Nina. Here we go, huh?

She nods, nervous. Her gaze shifts to the door as Brennan enters, along with a FRENCH BALLET MISTRESS and a jaded piano player.

BRENNAN
Okay, let's get to work.

The ballet mistress hands Nina a GREY PRACTICE TUTU.

FRENCH BALLET MISTRESS
For you.

Nina takes it, in awe.

33 INT. PRINCIPAL REHEARSAL SPACE - LATER 33

David dances around the space, miming a hunt with a cross-bow.

Nina enters, stretches her body to illustrate her transformation into human, then sees David and acts spooked. She dances away from him, a scared look on her face, undulating her arms to resemble a bird's flapping.

David gives chase, but Nina spins out of his grasp, disentangles from him.

But he eventually snags her, and they come very close together.

BRENNAN
Okay!

The music stops. Nina breaks out of character and looks at Brennan, anxious for his reaction.

The French ballet mistress nods and smiles, clearly pleased.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Okay, Nina. Very good. Fucking fantastic, in fact.

Nina smiles, relieved. Brennan hops out of his chair and approaches.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
I knew the White Swan wouldn't be a problem. The real work will be with the Black Swan.

NINA
Okay.

BRENNAN

I saw a flash of something
yesterday. A hint of her. Get ready
to show me more bite. Something
tells me you know what I'm talking
about.

He gives her an impish smirk. She looks down, embarrassed.

34 INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - DAY 34

Nina takes a drink from the water fountain. She hears music
emanating from the large rehearsal studio.

Curious, she walks to the open doorway and stops to watch.

CORPS MEMBERS and a few soloists form two lines on both sides
of the room. In the middle, Veronica dances along with Lily.

Nina pays close attention to Lily, sizing her up. Her dancing
is explosive, exudes sex.

BRENNAN (O.S.)

Watch the way she moves...

Brennan has snuck up behind Nina at the doorway and gets very
close to her.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

A little sloppy, but sensual. She's
not faking it. Pay attention.

Lily makes a small mistake, but cracks up laughing, amused
rather than bothered by her blunder.

Nina stares at her, attracted and threatened.

35 INT. PATRON OF THE ARTS APARTMENT - NIGHT 35

Brennan pulls Nina through a fundraiser gala, filled with
rich looking PATRONS and some DANCERS from the company.

Bewildered, Nina takes in her high-society surroundings,
getting the occasional curious glance as she passes.

Brennan grabs a couple CHAMPAGNE glasses off a WAITER'S tray.
He hands a glass to Nina with a smile. He downs his in a
single gulp and grabs another to replace it.

He leads her up a staircase to a landing that overlooks the
party.

BRENNAN

Ready to be thrown to the wolves?
We need their cash, so...smile.

She smiles, as instructed.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, please! Your
attention!

The crowd turns their gaze towards them. All eyes on her.
Nina smiles nervously.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

None of us would be here without
your generous support, so thank you
a thousand times over. Or, I hope,
a million times.

He puts his hands together, playfully pleading. Polite
laughter.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

I don't need to tell you about the
challenging climate we find
ourselves in. I see you wearing
more pearls than diamonds, and some
dresses here tonight are definitely
making a second appearance.

More polite laughter.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Ballet, like everything else, must
adapt to new contexts or it will
perish. Of course, some change is
sad even when it's necessary...

He pauses for effect.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

At the end of the season, Beth
Macintyre will be giving her
farewell performance as Melpomene,
the role she originated in my
ballet.

People start whispering, stunned by the news. Nina sees Beth
in the crowd, giving a sad smile to the surrounding guests.
Trying to remain dignified.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
 She will be greatly missed, but she
 will always be remembered. My
 little princess...

Amidst the mummering, Nina sees Beth quietly sneak out of the crowd and out the front door. Brennan quickly covers.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
 But as we bid adieu to one star, we
 welcome another!

He looks at Nina.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
 As you know, we open our season
 with my new version of Swan Lake.
 Taking the role of our new Swan
 Queen is the stunning and
 brilliantly talented Ms. Nina
 Sayers.

Restrained APPLAUSE.

Nina steps forward and curtseys. Someone seems to GIGGLE at her. Insecure, Nina glances towards the source and sees Lily flirting with a RICH GENT, uninterested in the official proceedings.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
 Soon you will have the pleasure of
 seeing her perform, tonight we
 raise a glass. To all of you, to
 Nina, to Beth, to beauty!

He downs his drink and the crowd follows suit.

CUT TO:

36 INT. LIVING ROOM, PATRON OF THE ARTS APARTMENT - LATER 36

PARTY GUESTS surround Nina and Brennan, trying to meet the company's newest star.

BRENNAN
 This is Mr. Goldman and his wife.

She shakes MR. GOLDMAN's hand and curtseys to MRS. GOLDMAN. They're replaced by another RICH HUSBAND and WIFE.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
 Mr. and Mrs. Steinhardt.

Nina repeats the pleasantries, then takes a nervous sip of champagne.

Brennan leans in close and whispers in her ear.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Relax, you're doing fine.

CUT TO:

37 INT. BATHROOM - LATER

37

Nina looks at herself in the mirror, taking deep breaths to calm herself down.

Someone KNOCKS on the door.

NINA
Just a second.

Nina washes her hands, but instead of drying them off, she wipes them on the back of her neck, trying to cool herself.

She brings her hands around and rubs the water on her face.

She feels something and stops. She looks in the mirror and sees a layer of SKIN has come loose on one of her cheeks.

Worried, she rubs it and a translucent layer peels off...

Revealing another flap of skin underneath.

She grabs hold of that flap, and pulls...revealing yet another flap, like the layers of an onion.

She panics, quickly pulls off a few more layers in rapid succession.

More KNOCKING startles her.

LILY (O.S.)
Come on! I'm about to burst!

Nina looks back at the mirror, and now her face looks normal. No loose skin. Pristine.

She backs away and opens the door.

Lily and her Rich Gent push in, laughing.

LILY (CONT'D)
Hey! Look who it is!

Lily quickly closes the door behind them and locks it.

LILY (CONT'D)
 (laughing)
 Sorry. Don't want anyone to see us.

RICH GENT
 Excuse me.

LILY
 Don't mind him. He's just a
 banker.

RICH GENT
 Hedge funds.

LILY
 Like there's a difference.

Rich Gent makes his way to the toilet and, though his back's turned, clearly prepares lines of cocaine on top of the basin. Nina's repulsed.

LILY (CONT'D)
 I'm Lily, by the way. Don't think
 we've officially met.

Lily holds out her hand. Nina limply shakes it.

NINA
 Nina.

LILY
 Our New Swan Queen! That is so
 huge! You must be freaking out.

NINA
 Yeah...I should get back.

LILY
 Please don't. He'll start talking
 about interest rates again.

He smirks at her.

LILY (CONT'D)
 Stay. Keep me company.

RICH MAN
 (passing rolled bill)
 Your turn...

NINA
 Excuse me.

Little miffed, Lily steps out of the way. Nina opens the door and steps out, where she's immediately met by Brennan.

BRENNAN (O.S.)
Ah, there you are.

Lily closes the door behind her.

38

EXT. UPPER EAST SIDE APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

38

Brennan escorts Nina out. It's a couple hours later and she's tipsy. She stumbles a little and grabs onto Brennan.

NINA
I think I drank too much. All those
toasts...

BRENNAN
You did well.

NINA
Seriously?

BRENNAN
They tried to eat you alive, but
here you are, in one piece.

NINA
(melting)
I guess.

BRENNAN
I'll get you a cab. Where you
going?

NINA
Oh, Upper West Side.

BRENNAN
Why don't you come to my place
first? It's on your way.

She gives him a coy glance, reading between the lines and hiding her excitement.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
For a drink. Unless you've had
enough.

NINA
I can handle another.

BRENNAN

Good.

He starts to look for a cab.

MRS. GOLDMAN (O.S.)

Michael!!!

They turn, see Mrs. Goldman, the host of the party, standing at the door.

MRS. GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

May I borrow you for one more minute? You need to say hello to Karen Hallaway before you disappear. She's from Texas. Correction: she *is* Texas.

BRENNAN

I'll be right there.

(to Nina)

A minute more of ass-kissing. Wait here.

He runs back inside to say his goodbyes.

Nina smiles after him, giddy and anxious.

She notices a slender figure watching her from the shadows of the adjoining doorway. Obscured by the dark, she looks like Nina.

NINA

(concerned)

Hello?

Spotted, the figure backs up, seeming to disappear.

Nina cautiously approaches, but can't see anyone.

She gets closer to the doorway...and someone JUMPS OUT, startling her.

It's Beth, drunk and shivering from the cold. Her cheeks streaked with mascara from crying.

NINA (CONT'D)

Beth? What are you doing out here?

Beth just stares daggers at her.

NINA (CONT'D)

Look, I can't imagine how you must feel about me.

BETH
You think I give a shit about you?

NINA
No, I just-

BETH
What'd you do to get the role?

NINA
Nothing.

BETH
He always said you were a frigid
little girl.

Her words needle Nina, too close to the truth.

BETH (CONT'D)
So what did you do to make him
change his mind? Suck his cock?

NINA
Some of us don't need to do that.

Nina's struck a nerve. Beth starts to come at her.

BETH
You fucking little whore.

NINA
(guilty)
Beth, I'm-

BRENNAN (O.S.)
What's going on?

They both turn to see Brennan returned.

BETH
I need to talk to you.

BRENNAN
You're drunk. Go home.

BETH
Don't do that! Don't just dismiss
me!

BRENNAN
(exasperated)
Little princess...poor, poor little
princess. Try to hold it together.

BETH
I'm going to drop by later, okay? I
have something I want to give you.

BRENNAN
(ignoring her)
Come on.

He puts his arm around Nina, starts to lead her away.

BETH (O.S.)
A token of my appreciation.

He ignores her and raises his arm to hail a cab. As they
enter the cab, Beth calls after them.

BETH (CONT'D)
Make the most of it Nina.

Through the cab window Nina looks at Beth and is disturbed by
her words.

39 INT. BRENNAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

39

Tasteful but spare loft. Modern and expensive furniture.
Large windows.

Nina stands alone, looking around his inner sanctum, wide-
eyed.

She explores the pieces of art, the furniture. She touches
some of it, in awe.

BRENNAN (O.S.)
Here.

She turns, finds Brennan holding out yet another flute of
champagne. For himself, a scotch.

NINA
Thanks.

She looks up at him, expecting him to make a move. Instead,
he walks away, and sits in a chair. He gestures for her to
sit as well.

Confused, she sits across from him, alone on the large couch.

He takes an unceremonious sip of his drink and studies her.
Uncomfortable, she takes a drink as well.

BRENNAN

I thought it'd be good to talk
about the role. Ground us a little.

NINA

Yes.

BRENNAN

The better we get to know each
other, the more productive we'll
be. I don't want there to be any
boundaries between us.

NINA

Me neither.

BRENNAN

Good. So, do you have a boyfriend?

She's caught off guard by his question and just smiles
uncomfortably. He waits for an answer. Finally she manages a
reply.

NINA

No...

BRENNAN

Have you had many in the past?

NINA

A few. But no one serious.

BRENNAN

Please tell me you're not a virgin.

Her expression sours at this line of questioning. She shakes
her head.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

And you enjoy sex?

NINA

Excuse me?

BRENNAN

Sex. Copulation. Fucking.

Nina can't respond.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Have you ever climaxed?

Blushing and feeling awkward, she takes a sip of champagne.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
We need to be able to talk about
this.

NINA
Okay.

BRENNAN
So? Have you?

Nina looks at him, embarrassed, and shrugs.

He smirks, and joins her on the couch.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
I have a little homework assignment
for you.

NINA
Yes?

BRENNAN
Go home and masturbate.

She blushes again, scandalized.

He finishes off his scotch and stands.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
It's late. You should probably get
going.

He leaves her alone in the living room, unsettled and
humiliated.

40 INT. NINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

40

Nina looks at herself in the mirror, pulling bobbie-pins out
of her hair, releasing it.

Erica tidies up her room, picking up strewn clothing, folding
it, putting it away.

ERICA
Sounds like quite an evening. Wish
I could have been there.

NINA
You know I asked.

ERICA
I know. He wanted you all to
himself.

NINA
That's not why.

Erica sidles up to Nina and looks adoringly at their reflection in the mirror.

ERICA
I don't blame him.

Nina steps back from the mirror, ready to be alone.

NINA
I wanna get out of this dress.

Erica walks behind her and reaches to unzip her.

NINA (CONT'D)
I can do it.

ERICA
Turn.

Nina turns around, reticent.

ERICA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
He must have been at your side all night, showing you off.

Erica finishes unzipping the red dress and sees Nina's shoulder.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Oh Nina...

Remembering, Nina pulls away from her.

NINA
It's just a little rash.

Erica gruffly pulls Nina to the mirror and turns her around.

ERICA
Where? What are you talking about?

Nina checks her reflection and sees the RASH, red and irritated from scratching.

NINA
It was worse a couple days ago.
It's already getting better.

ERICA
You've been scratching again.

NINA

No-

Erica yanks her out of the room.

41 INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM - NIGHT 41

Nina sits on the toilet, stripped to her underwear. She does her best to cover herself.

Erica places a band aid over her cream covered back and side. She replaces the cap on a tube of PRESCRIPTION CREAM.

She pulls out NAIL CLIPPERS.

Erica carefully cuts her nails down to their base.

Each CLICK makes Nina twitch.

ERICA

I thought you'd outgrown this disgusting habit. (click) You haven't done it for years. (click) What's going on with you? (click)

NINA

Mom, please.

Erica grabs Nina's other hand.

ERICA

It's the role, isn't it? All this pressure... I was worried it'd be too much.

Nina stares at her, seething.

42 INT. NINA'S BEDROOM - LATER 42

Nina crawls into bed, avoiding her mother's eyes.

ERICA

Don't be mad at me sweetheart. You know I love you, you know I want what's best for you. But you have to take care of yourself.

Nina doesn't respond.

Erica opens the JEWELRY BOX and the tinny music begins playing.

She hums and starts to stroke Nina's hair.

Nina tries to brush her hand away.

But Erica brings it back and keeps stroking.

43 INT. NINA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

43

Nina lies wide awake after a restless night.

She slowly reaches down under the covers, down between her legs, to complete Brennan's "homework assignment."

She closes her eyes and starts to maneuver.

She suddenly hears a RUSTLING sound and a short SNORE.

She freezes and opens her eyes. She slowly sits up in bed and sees Erica SLEEPING on a chair in the corner of the room.

Nina glares at her, frustrated.

44 INT. LARGE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

44

Nina waits her turn as a row of DANCERS perform grand jetes diagonally across the room.

She watches Veronica perform her leaps. She rejoins the group, giving Nina a nasty stare.

Nina avoids it, looking towards Lily, who gives her a small smile.

Just as Nina's turn arrives, a panicked YOUNG CORP DANCER rushes in and makes a beeline for the severe ballet mistress.

Nina takes one leap and then stops dancing, sensing something's wrong.

The administrator whispers into the ballet mistress' ear. A look of shock on the mistress' face.

The dancer collapses into the older woman's arms.

The piano music trickles to a halt.

Nina exchanges glances with some of the other dancers.

First a few, then more dancers approach the two women, wanting to find out what's happened.

Nina hangs back, filled with a sinking feeling.

45

INT. PRINCIPALS' DRESSING ROOM - DAY

45

Nina and Brennan are in the dressing room together. Beth's presence is everywhere in the room - her photographs on the wall, her costumes hanging up in the wardrobe, some of her personal belongings scattered across the space.

BRENNAN

She made threats, but I never thought she'd go as far as this.

NINA

What did she do?

BRENNAN

Jumped off her fire escape, fell four stories.

NINA

Oh my god...

BRENNAN

Turns out she knew how to punish me.

Nina stays quiet.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Without her final performances, there's only the opening to keep us alive.

Daunted, Nina walks over to a large bouquet of FRESH FLOWERS. She notices a white card tucked into them, but doesn't retrieve it.

He comes up behind her.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

They're from me.

Nina nods, feeling awkward.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

If you feel uncomfortable in here, I understand. We can put you with Sophie and Kat for now.

NINA

Were we the last people to see her?

BRENNAN

It's not important. None of this is your responsibility.

He touches her arm to comfort her, but she ignores the gesture.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Look at me.

She turns around, but keeps her gaze on the floor. He lifts her chin.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

What we do is beautiful, but fleeting. Dance is not immortalized like music, poetry or art. It doesn't grow old in museums and churches. It lives for now. For this moment only. And this is your moment.

She nods.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

You should get settled.

He leaves her alone. She looks around the room, taking it all in.

She removes the card out from the flowers and reads what's inside. She closes it, disconcerted.

46

INT. ST. LUKE'S ROOSEVELT HOSPITAL - DAY

46

Nina exits the elevator with a BROWN SHOPPING BAG. She walks down a stark hallway and approaches Beth's hospital room.

A group of FRIENDS surround her bed, blocking Beth from view.

Nina considers going in, but shyly sulks past, drawing the attention of an OLDER NURSE.

OLDER NURSE

You can go in.

NINA

It's okay.

The older nurse gives her a skeptical glance and continues on her rounds.

Nina walks a little further and leans against the wall to wait.

She hears the sound of shuffling feet, looks over, and sees the group of people exit the room and walk down the hall, comforting one another.

Nina steps out from hiding and goes inside.

47

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM- DAY

47

Beth is bandaged and unconscious, attached to MACHINES.

Nina stands at a distance, too intimidated to approach at first.

She looks around the room. It is lined with large, EXPENSIVE-LOOKING BOUQUETS.

She removes the flowers Brennan gave her from the brown bag, and sets them next to the others.

Nina slowly approaches Beth's bedside.

Beth's face is heavily wrapped with bandages. Only her closed eyes and pale lips can be seen.

She scans down her body, sees a sliver of her thigh, purple with bruises.

Curious, Nina lifts the top edge of the blanket and peeks underneath.

The legs are bloated and horribly bruised, pierced with large pins to reset the shattered bones.

She looks lower and lower, and discovers MAGGOTS feeding on her ankles.

Someone GRABS her wrist.

OLDER NURSE

What are you doing?!

Nina doesn't have an answer. She just stumbles out the door.

48

INT. PRINCIPAL REHEARSAL SPACE - LATER

48

Nina, David, and the dancer playing ROTHBART rehearse the Black Swan and Prince Siegfried's Pas De Deux from Act 3, soaked with sweat.

David lifts her, then sets her down, and they lean-in towards each other, almost kissing. Nina looks tense.

BRENNAN

No, no, not so stiff. Don't be scared of him.

Displeased, he CLAPS and the music stops.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

NINA

Nothing.

BRENNAN

Nothing? David, answer me this question: are you interested in fucking her?

David snickers, embarrassed, shakes his head.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

No, of course not. No one would be.

Brennan comes face to face with her.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Nina, right now, your Black Swan looks no different than your White Swan. She's's just as...frigid.

Nina nods, insecure.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

(looking at watch)

Okay David, you can go. Nina, you stay. We need to keep working.

David gives her an insinuating glance, then shakes his head. Very used to Brennan "methods."

DAVID

Have fun you two.

49

INT. PRINCIPAL REHEARSAL SPACE - NIGHT

49

Nina performs the Black Swan's solo. She still looks stiff and uncomfortable. Certainly not the seductress he's looking for.

BRENNAN

(exasperated)

No, no, no. Not so contained. Come on!

He CLAPS his hands and she stops dancing, agitated. He runs his hand through his hair, frustrated.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Take off your shoes. We're going to try something.

She hesitates.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
I'm serious. I want you to dance without them. Do it.

She sits on the ground and quickly yanks them off.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Now, get me to desire you.

NINA
How?

BRENNAN
For fuck's sake, however you want, but I want it to come from you, not the ballet.

He nods at the piano player. The music begins.

Brennan look at Nina, waiting.

She's petrified at first, but does a few tentative steps, completely lost without the choreography to guide her.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Stop, stop!

The music stops again. He takes a deep breath, clearly disappointed.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
(to Piano Player)
Go ahead. Can't afford *triple* overtime.

JADED PIANO PLAYER
Didn't think so.

The piano player starts packing up.

BRENNAN
Nina, from inside. Lure me.

She tries to move in a more seductive way.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
It's not about your mind. Stop
thinking.

NINA
I'm trying.

The piano player leaves. Brennan and Nina are all alone.

BRENNAN
Watch.

He starts HUMMING, demonstrating the choreography for her.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Use each finger, your face, your
tits, everything. Tempt me!

Though he's obviously not a woman, his dancing is definitely
more seductive and sexual.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Okay? It's not difficult-

Suddenly, the lights turn off, throwing them into total
darkness.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Fuck!

Brennan angrily marches to the door and whips it open.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
(to someone in hall)
Hey! We're still working in here.
Lights back on.

There's a momentary pause, and then the lights return.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Thank you!
(to Nina)
We're the only ones left.

He approaches her and takes her hands in his. She looks at
him.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
I'll be the Prince.

He walks behind her and puts his hands on her waist.

Made nervous by his touch, she nods.

He starts humming the score. And then they begin.

They do a series of lifts and spins, Brennan bracing her.

He lets go, she moves away from him. Then he grabs her wrist. She spins. He lets go. He grabs her other wrist, she spins to face him.

They get very close.

Just before they kiss she dips, pulls away.

He grabs her arm again, she spins, then he stops her, her back to him.

He runs his hands down her arms. Slowly, seductively. She trembles.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Just feel my touch and respond.

She turns and leans in close, as though to kiss him... almost touching lips...but then she tries to push off again. He tightens his grip, holds her there.

She looks back at him, questioning. He looks at her intently, pulls her to him, and kisses her.

She melts and eagerly kisses him back. He pulls away, momentarily.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Slow down. Open your mouth.

She doesn't.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

(insistent)

Open it.

Nina follows his instruction.

The kiss grows more heated and he wraps his arms around her.

He pushes her back against the mirror. She whimpers.

He runs his hand down her body, then reaches between her legs. She GASPS, tries to pull his hand out, but he persists.

She throws her head back as he kisses her neck. She breathes deep, emits short MOANS, succumbing...

Suddenly, he pulls away from her. She looks at him confused, flushed and breathing hard.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

That was me seducing you. It needs
to be the other way around.

He turns and starts to walk away. She can't believe it.

NINA

Please. Don't go.

He ignores her and walks out of the room.

50

INT. PRINCIPAL REHEARSAL SPACE - LATER

50

Nina sits on the floor, head in hands.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey...

Nina startles and looks up. Sees the dark figure of somebody
watching her from the doorway. Looks like HERSELF.

NINA

Who's that?

Lily emerges from the darkness.

LILY

You okay?

NINA

I'm fine.

LILY

You sure?

Nina nods, but Lily sits down beside her, oblivious of Nina's
desire to be left alone.

She digs out a cigarette from her bag. Offers it to Nina.
Nina doesn't take it.

LILY (CONT'D)

You look like you could use it.

NINA

We can't smoke in here.

LILY

I won't tell if you won't.

Nina reluctantly takes the cigarette, holds it a little
awkwardly, clearly not a regular smoker.

Lily sparks a flame for her and then lights one for herself. Nina puffs, but doesn't inhale. Lily smirks.

LILY (CONT'D)
Big day's getting closer and closer, huh? I can't wait. You're going to be amazing.

NINA
Thanks...

Nina wipes off her tears with her hand.

LILY
So, want to talk about it?

NINA
Just had a hard day.

LILY
Brennan play too rough?

Nina looks at her surprised.

LILY (CONT'D)
Just a guess. He seems like a prick.

NINA
He's brilliant.

LILY
Sure, but not exactly warm and fuzzy.

NINA
You don't know him.

Lily smirks with a realization.

LILY
Someone's hot for teacher.

Nina gives her a withering glance.

LILY (CONT'D)
It's okay. I don't blame you.

Nina stands up.

NINA
I should go. It's getting late.

LILY
Hey, I was only playing.

Nina walks towards the door.

LILY (CONT'D)
Nina?

She ignores Lily and exits.

51 INT. SUBWAY - NIGHT 51

Nina sits on the subway, going home.

A SKEEZY MAN across the aisle ogles her.

Nina keeps her eyes down, trying to ignore him. He starts to sing an OLD LOVE SONG from the 20's.

Nina stands and goes to the other end of the car. He continues singing, undeterred.

52 INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM - NIGHT 52

Nina showers, letting the warm water wash over her.

She hears the door open and turns.

She looks out through the shower curtain, sees a BLURRED FIGURE standing in the bathroom.

NINA
Just a sec. I'm almost done.

No response. The figure stays still.

NINA (CONT'D)
(annoyed)
Mom-

Nina whips open the curtain.

The door is shut. The outline of the mom is just a dark ROBE hanging on the door.

Relieved, she closes the curtain and turns...

Comes face to face with her smiling twin, the DOUBLE.

Nina scrambles back, trying to get away, and slips into the tub.

She turns over and looks up. The Double is gone.

But she can see rust-colored water circling into the drain.

She feels her shoulder and winces. Looks at her hand and sees a little blood.

Nina turns off the shower and cautiously steps out of the tub.

She looks at herself in the mirror. Her shoulder is covered in deep, bloody SCRATCHES.

She looks at her fingers and sees that her nails have started to grow back.

She grabs a pair of little SCISSORS from the medicine cabinet and starts trimming them.

She looks up at the mirror and sees her reflection snip off the tip of her index finger.

Nina GASPS and drops the scissors, CLANGING in the sink. Two of her fingers are bleeding, their tips sliced.

ERICA (O.S.)
Sweetie? Everything okay in there?

NINA
Yes.

Nina watches the door knob, hoping she won't come in.

Footsteps recede and Nina breathes.

She runs her hands under some water to clean off the blood.

53

INT. NINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

53

Nina removes a HOOK AND EYE LATCH from a small paper bag, her two fingertips bandaged in WHITE MEDICAL TAPE.

She quietly screws it into the door and door frame.

She tests it. Holds pretty well.

She unlatches it, not ready just yet.

She quickly lies down on her bed and waits to be tucked in.

The door CREEKS open. Someone's in the doorway.

54 INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - DAY 54

Nina enters, checks the bulletin board for the day's schedule, and then heads to her dressing room.

As she nears it, she spots Brennan further down the hall...chatting with Lily.

He looks serious, nodding at something she's saying.

Nina watches them, a little worried, before ducking into her room.

55 INT. LARGE REHEARSAL SPACE - LATER 55

David and Nina dance the Black Swan's Pas de Deux. Once again, Nina's rigid and self-conscious.

BRENNAN

Try it again.

They resume dancing. She finishes, out of breath, and looks at Brennan and the French ballet mistress.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Again.

The piano music starts up again, and she begins dancing.

When she finishes, she looks at him, eager for feedback.

FRENCH BALLETT MISTRESS

(to Brennan)

J'espère que vous savez ce que vous faites. Elle ne l'obtient pas.

Brennan just gives her a shrug. Their secret exchange makes Nina nervous.

BRENNAN

(to Nina)

Again.

The music starts up again. Nina stays still, frustrated.

NINA

Do you have any adjustments?

BRENNAN

No. I'm taking it easy on you today.

She doesn't understand. He gets up from his chair and goes to her.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Lily talked to me. Said she saw you
crying last night after I left.

Nina looks away. Can't believe Lily talked to him.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
She said you were upset and I
should "take it easy" on you.

NINA
I didn't tell her that.

BRENNAN
Maybe you'd like a break for a day
or two.

NINA
Michael-

BRENNAN
Or a fucking month.

NINA
She shouldn't have said anything!

BRENNAN
I don't care! You shouldn't be
whining to her!

NINA
I didn't.

BRENNAN
If I take it easy on you, you're
going to be shit!

He walks away from her, frustrated.

NINA
I'm sorry. I'm *sorry*.

BRENNAN
Stop saying that! Stop being so
fucking weak!

He tosses his chair across the room. SMASHING into the wall.

CUT TO:

56 INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - DAY

56

Furious, Nina heads towards the soloists' dressing room.
Hears them chatting in their usual manner.

Nina KNOCKS loudly at the door, interrupting them.

VERONICA
(resentful)
Look who's gracing us with her
presence...

NINA
Lily, I need to talk to you.

LILY
Okay...

NINA
Now.

VERONICA
(you're in trouble)
Ooooh.

The other girls giggle.

LILY
Shut up.

And they do.

57 INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - DAY

57

Nina leads Lily to a private nook, fuming.

LILY
What's wrong?

NINA
You told Michael about last night?

Lily falters, guilty.

LILY
I ran into him this morning. He
said you guys were having some
trouble.

NINA
Why would he talk to you?

LILY
Whoa, your highness. I just told
him not to stress. That I'm sure
you'll be great.

NINA
You shouldn't have done that.

LILY
I didn't fucking do anything.

Lily walks away, pissed.

58 EXT. THEATER - NIGHT

58

Nina exits from the stage doors, still stewing from her day.

VOICES (O.S.)
Ms. Sayers! Ms. Sayers!

Startled, Nina looks up, finds a small group of ECCENTRICS
approaching her with hungry expressions.

NINA
(confused)
What?

One JITTERY FAN, wearing overly large, wire-frame bifocals
tentatively holds out the SEASON'S CALENDAR.

JITTERY FAN
By your picture. But not over your
face. On the bottom, there.

Nina's expression softens, realizing who they are.

NINA
Yes, of course.

She takes the pen and signs.

A MOUSY WOMAN hands out a fistful of hard candy.

MOUSY WOMAN
Treats for you.

NINA
(humoring)
So sweet.

Nina obliges a couple other fans, her mood improved by the
attention.

JITTERY FAN
We can't wait! We just can't wait!

CUT TO:

59 INT. UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT - NIGHT

59

Nina and Erica eat dinner. Nina wears a loose sweatshirt, hiding her body.

ERICA
Has he tried anything with you?

Nina doesn't respond. Just downs a few vitamins, then starts in on her meal of vegetables and rice.

ERICA (CONT'D)
He has a reputation...

Nina tries to ignore her.

ERICA (CONT'D)
I have a right to be concerned,
Nina. Staying late so many nights.
"Rehearsing." I hope he's not
taking advantage, that's all.

NINA
(staring at her plate)
He's not.

ERICA
Good. I don't want you making the
same mistake I did.

NINA
(insulted)
Right.

ERICA
Not like that, sweetheart. I just
mean as far as my career was
concerned.

NINA
What career?

ERICA
The one I gave up to have you.

NINA
You were 28.

ERICA
So?

NINA
And still in the corps.

Nina scoffs and shakes her head.

ERICA
How's your shoulder?

NINA
My shoulder's fine.

ERICA
Leaving it alone?

NINA
Yes.

Erica stands and starts towards her. Nina instinctively shoots up from the table.

ERICA
What's got into you?

NINA
Nothing.

ERICA
Let me see.

NINA
No.

ERICA
Let me see!

Erica descends on her.

NINA
Get away.

ERICA
Take off your shirt.

NINA
Stop it!

The DOORBELL startles them both.

ERICA
Are you expecting someone?

Erica looks at Nina questioningly. Nina shrugs.

Erica goes to the door and cracks it open, keeping the chain engaged.

ERICA (CONT'D)
 (to person outside)
 Can I help you? (pause) I'm sorry,
 she's not in.

Erica shuts the door. Nina rushes out to see who it was.

NINA
 Who was it?

Erica doesn't answer.

Irritated, Nina walks around Erica and quickly opens the door to find out.

ERICA
 It's no one.

60 INT. BUILDING HALLWAY- NIGHT

60

Nina sees a ballerina walking away from the door.

NINA
 Hello?

Lily turns. Her hair has been subtly restyled. Looks more like Nina's. Nina takes an inadvertent step back, unsettled.

LILY
 Hey.

NINA
 (suspicious)
 What are you doing here?

Nina steps out of her apartment and closes the door.

LILY
 I wanted to apologize. You're
 right, it's none of my business. I
 shouldn't have talked to him about
 you.

Erica opens the door and sticks her head out.

ERICA
 Sweetheart?

NINA
Give me a sec, mom.

ERICA
Your dinner...

NINA
Mom, please!

Erica closes the door.

LILY
She's a trip...

NINA
How did you know where I live?

LILY
I have my ways.

Nina looks at her, darkly.

LILY (CONT'D)
Relax, I got it from Susie, in the office.

NINA
You could have told me tomorrow.

LILY
I know. But I felt shitty, so I came now.

NINA
Okay then.

LILY
Can I make it up to you? Take you out to dinner or something?

NINA
I don't think-

LILY
A drink?

Nina's tempted. Erica pokes her head out *again*.

ERICA
Sweetie, you need to rest.

LILY
Jesus.

NINA
 (to Lily)
 Wait.

Nina walks to the door, and grabs her coat.

ERICA
 What are you doing?

NINA
 I'm going out.

Erica grabs onto it.

ERICA
 It's late.

Nina tries to yank the coat free, but Erica holds on tight.
 Nina yanks harder and whips it out of her grasp.

ERICA (CONT'D)
 Nina!

Nina ignores her and shuts the door.

NINA
 (to Lily)
 Let's go.

61 INT. CORNER BISTRO - NIGHT

61

A noisy bar and burger joint, packed to the brim. Lily and Nina sit at a small table.

LILY
 Can you believe that's what he
 called her?

NINA
 I think it's sweet.

LILY
Little princess? He probably calls
 every girl that.

NINA
 Only Beth.

LILY
 Well, I'm sure she lost the title
 after her experiment with gravity.

Nina's smile fades.

LILY (CONT'D)
Bet he'll be calling you little
princess any day now.

NINA
I don't think so.

Lily studies her and digs into her purse. Pulls out a SEXY SHIRT.

LILY
Here, wanna spruce up?

Nina gives her a puzzled look.

LILY (CONT'D)
I always carry a spare, case I wake
up somewhere new.

NINA
That's alright-

Before Nina can object, a WAITER brusquely drops their orders on the table.

LILY
Thank god, I'm starving.

In front of Lily, a huge, greasy cheeseburger and fries. In front of Nina, a chicken breast sandwich, no fries. She removes the bun.

Lily picks up her ungainly burger and takes a big bite, a little grease dripping down her chin.

LILY (CONT'D)
Oh man, that is a good burger.
Here. You gotta try it.

NINA
I don't eat red meat.

LILY
Ah, flesh. The joys of being a
carnivore. You sure?

NINA
Alright.

Nina leans forward, takes a small bite. Lily waits for the verdict. Nina smiles.

NINA (CONT'D)
Pretty good.

LILY
 Pretty good?! It's like sex in a
 bun.

NINA
 I guess.

LILY
 How is he anyway?

Nina ignores the question.

LILY (CONT'D)
Brennan?

NINA
 I wouldn't know.

LILY
 Really? I just assumed...

NINA
 I don't want to talk about it.

LILY
 Okay, relax, just making
 conversation.

Lily exhales a breath and casually digs in her purse. She pulls out a cigarette case and clicks it open. Inside, CIGARETTES and a couple PILLS.

LILY (CONT'D)
 One for me...

Lily grabs one of the pills and slides it over.

LILY (CONT'D)
 And one for you.

Lily grabs her pill and downs it with a beer.

Nina stares at her pill, too embarrassed to admit she doesn't know what it is. Lily notices.

LILY (CONT'D)
 Don't worry, it's pure. Straight
 from San Fran.

NINA
 What is it?

LILY
 You're kidding? You never rolled?

Nina blinks.

LILY (CONT'D)

Oh boy. It'll just make you have a good time. Loosen up. See the night sky.

NINA

(curious)

How long does it last?

LILY

Couple hours. Tops.

Nina looks at the pill, thinks about it for a second...

NINA

That's okay.

LILY

Sure?

Nina nods. Lily puts the pill back, and SNAPS the case closed.

62 INT. GRUNGY BATHROOM - NIGHT

62

Filthy and cramped. Nina tries on the SKIMPY SHIRT Lily offered her.

She checks herself out in the mirror, broken and covered with graffiti and stickers. One bright sticker says, "Seize the Day-glo."

Nina's cell phone RINGS. She checks the ID--"MOM"--and silences it.

Nina puts her SWEATSHIRT back on over the shirt, and exits.

63 INT. CORNER BISTRO - NIGHT

63

Nina returns to her table, but when she gets there, Lily is gone and the table is cleared.

She looks around the crowded room, doesn't see her anywhere.

She heads towards the exit, and sees Lily at the bar, flirting with TWO ATTRACTIVE MEN. She's very touchy-feely.

Intrigued, Nina stays put, wanting to observe Lily from a distance.

The BARTENDER sets a drink down in front of Lily. The men compete to pay for it.

Lily takes out the CIGARETTE CASE from her purse, and removes the pill.

Nina looks on, suspicious.

Lily opens the pill, and dumps its contents into the drink. She stirs it with her finger.

She holds out her finger to one of the men, he sucks off the liquid.

Lily looks over and catches Nina watching. She waves for her to join them.

Nina reluctantly walks to her.

LILY
Heeey, thought we could use some drinks.

NINA
I'm gonna go.

LILY
This is Tom and this is Jerry.

The guys laugh.

ANDREW
Actually it's Andrew.

TOM
Tom.

NINA
Hi.

LILY
You can't leave, I bought you a drink.

Lily holds out the doctored beverage. Nina eyes it, tempted to go down the rabbit hole...

NINA
I really shouldn't, early day tomorrow.

LILY
What, you gonna go home to mommy?

Nina grins sheepishly. She takes the drink. Lily smiles.

NINA
A couple of hours?

LILY
Tops.

Nina takes a tiny sip.

LILY (CONT'D)
Go on.

Nina takes another sip and smiles.

LILY (CONT'D)
Let's go sit somewhere a little
more comfortable. Gentlemen?

She gets up and holds out her hands. The two men each grab one and she leads them deeper into the bar.

64 INT. CORNER BISTRO - MOMENTS LATER

64

Nina's drink is half gone. The foursome sits snugly at a booth. Nina next to Andrew, shyly avoiding his gaze. She takes another tentative sip of her drink.

ANDREW
You haven't told me who you are.

NINA
Oh, I'm a dancer.

ANDREW
No, I mean your name.

NINA
Nina.

TOM
You two sisters?

Yes.

LILY

No.

NINA

ANDREW
Well?

LILY
We're blood sisters.

NINA

We dance in the same company.

TOM

(pleased)

Ahh, *ballerinas*. So that's why you look alike.

LILY

Tom and Jerry are gay lovers.

TOM

Very funny.

LILY

Oh, I just assumed.

ANDREW

I've never been to the ballet.

LILY

In that case you're definitely NOT gay.

TOM

It's pretty boring, isn't it?

NINA

(offended)

No, it's not.

LILY

(flirty)

It's not for everyone. You probably aren't sophisticated enough.

TOM

You've got some mouth, you know that?

LILY

Isn't that compliment a little premature?

Lily sips her drink, staring at Tom flirtatiously.

NINA

You guys should come sometime. I can comp you tickets.

Tom laughs, amused by Nina's earnestness.

TOM

Yeah...that'd be neat.

LILY
I think we all need another round.
Bottom's up.

TOM
Sounds good.

She sucks down her drink. Nina takes a breath of courage and empties her glass.

She waits for something to kick in.

LILY
Tom, grab another drink with me at
the bar?

He and Lily leave Nina and Andrew alone. She avoids his gaze, nervous.

ANDREW
So...what are you guys working on
these days?

Her cell phone RINGS, interrupting him. She quickly turns it off and gives him an embarrassed smile.

NINA
Sorry. Swan Lake.

ANDREW
Yeah?

NINA
You know it?

ANDREW
Oh, no, not really. Heard of it
though. What's it about?

NINA
It's about a girl who's been turned
into a swan. She needs love to
break the spell.

ANDREW
Okay.

NINA
Yeah, but her prince falls for the
wrong girl and she kills herself.

ANDREW
So a happy ending, then?

NINA
It's beautiful, actually.

ANDREW
Like you.

She starts to feel the initial tingles of the drug.

NINA
Huh?

ANDREW
I said you're beautiful.

She giggles.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
That funny?

She gives him a flirtatious glance.

NINA
My hands are all sweaty.

Andrew touches them. She grabs onto his hands. She looks at his face. His eyes twinkle at her.

Lily slides in next to her. Nina sees her and melts into her body. Lily hugs her back.

LILY
Uh oh! Looks like someone's
rolling. Let's get you dancing.

CUT TO:

65 INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT

65

Nina kisses Tom on the floor of a crowded dance club. The drug is in full effect.

The world has soft edges, colors are vivid and bleed into one another.

A hand grabs her arm and twirls her around. It belongs to Lily.

Nina attaches herself to her, hungry for the attention. A cheering section of guys surrounds them.

Nina lets loose. Dances with abandon.

66 INT. CLUB BATHROOM - LATER 66

Nina makes out with someone, her back pushed up against the wall. Her eyes are closed, she's shiny with sweat.

She opens her eyes, confused to find that it's not Andrew or even Tom, just a STRANGE MAN.

She backs away. He reaches for her, but she swats him off.

67 INT. DANCE CLUB - CONTINUOUS 67

She stumbles around the dance floor, looking for Lily, but only sees a mass of moving bodies.

She finally spots a girl that looks like her from behind. Nina grabs her shoulder and the GIRL spins around. Not Lily.

68 EXT. DANCE CLUB - LATER 68

Nina pushes her way out of the club, starting to panic. She looks around, trying to figure out where she is, but the city is dark and non-descript.

LILY (O.S.)

Nina!

Nina turns towards the voice and, with relief, sees Lily exit the club.

LILY (CONT'D)

Where you goin'?

69 INT. TAXI - NIGHT 69

Nina stares adoringly at Lily, who has her eyes closed, enjoying the cool air blowing in from her open window.

Lily opens her eyes and catches Nina staring. Lily smirks.

Using her index and middle finger as "legs," she "walks" her hand over the vinyl seat, all the way to Nina's leg and pokes it.

Nina watches her hand with a smile on her face, glances at Lily.

Lily smiles back, and then "walks" her hand up the leg, until it reaches the edge of Nina's dress.

Lily looks at Nina questioningly. Nina doesn't protest.

Lily slips her hand underneath the dress, gently makes contact...

Nina shudders, but pulls Lily's hand back out and holds it.

Lily snickers and looks out her window.

Nina looks at their clasped hands, then out her own window, happy.

70 INT. UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER 70

Nina quietly opens the front door.

Lily GIGGLES. Nina SHUSHES her.

They tip-toe inside.

71 UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT 71

Nina eases the door shut.

Lily taps her on the shoulder and points towards the hallway.

Erica emerges from the darkness, approaching them slowly. Distraught.

ERICA

Do you have any idea what time it is?

NINA

Mmm-hmm. Late.

ERICA

Where have you been?

NINA

To the moon and back.

ERICA

You've been drinking.

NINA

(correct answer)
Ding ding ding.

Lily snickers, Nina tries to keep a straight face, but ends up laughing.

ERICA

What else?

NINA

Huh?

ERICA

What else have you been doing?

Nina just smiles coyly.

Erica grabs Nina's wrist.

ERICA (CONT'D)

Let's get you to bed.

NINA

You want to know their names?

ERICA

You need to sleep it off.

NINA

There were two. Tom and Jerry...

ERICA

Be quiet, Nina.

NINA

(giggling)

I fucked both of them.

ERICA

Shut your mouth!

Erica violently jams her fingers over Nina's lips, trying to silence her.

Nina glares at her. Erica pulls her hand away, guilty.

ERICA (CONT'D)

Now come on.

NINA

Stay away from me.

Nina runs into her room. SLAMS the door.

72

INT. NINA'S BEDROOM

72

She hooks the eye of her new latch. She backs Lily away, preparing for the storm.

NINA

Don't come in here!

Erica tries to open the door, but the latch catches. She peers her eye through the crack.

ERICA
What's this?

Erica tries the door more fervently, but the latch holds.

ERICA (CONT'D)
(hurt)
You put on a lock?

NINA
It's called privacy!

ERICA
Nina! Open this! Right this second!

NINA
I'm not fucking twelve years old anymore!

ERICA
You're not my Nina right now!

NINA
LEAVE ME ALONE!!!

Nina SHOVES the door shut and RE-LOCKS it.

Erica's FOOTSTEPS retreat, followed by the SLAM of her bedroom door.

Nina is worked up, breathing hard.

LILY
Whoa...

Nina grabs Lily and kisses her, revved-up from the confrontation.

Lily responds with equal force. They claw at each other, passion exceeding coordination.

Lily pulls Nina's shirt off and throws her onto the bed.

She straddles Nina, who looks up at her carnivorously.

Lily takes her own top off, plunges down and kisses Nina.

Nina flips Lily over, becomes the dominant one.

Lily scratches Nina's back, over some of the rash.

There's subtle movement underneath the skin. Little pin pricks push up the flesh, trailing behind her hand.

Self-conscious, Nina grabs Lily's hand and holds her wrists down.

She bites her neck. Lily smiles, likes the violence.

She digs her nails into Nina's hands.

Then Lily gets back on top of Nina. The dark wing tattoos on her shoulders undulate and spread out.

She kisses down Nina's body. Further and further...

Lily starts to go down on Nina.

Nervous, Nina whimpers. Glances down and sees the DOUBLE.

She tries to pull away.

LILY shushes her.

Nina calms back down, seeing that it's her. She takes a breath and succumbs.

Bumps shoot up all over her skin as her breath quickens.

She closes her eyes allows the sensation to invade her body and CLIMAXES.

She breathes her way back to earth. Slowly her eyes open. She rolls over towards Lily. But Lily is gone.

Instead her DOUBLE hovers over her.

DOUBLE
Sweet girl.

She SMASHES a pillow over Nina's face.

CUT TO:

73

INT. NINA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

73

Nina lies alone in bed, the sheets and comforter in disarray.

She sits up, clutches her head in pain.

She looks around, but there's no sign of Lily or the Double.

Then her eyes drift to the alarm clock: 9:36.

NINA

Shit!

She snaps out of bed.

74 INT. UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT - MORNING

74

Dishevelled, Nina races towards the front door. She sees Erica brooding at the kitchen table, watching her.

NINA

Why didn't you wake me?

Erica just stares at her, devastated.

NINA (CONT'D)

I'm moving out.

Nina whips out the front door and leaves her.

75 INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - DAY

75

Nina races. She hears muffled Black Swan music playing, rehearsal clearly in progress.

NINA

(to herself)

My music.

She runs to the closed doors of the rehearsal space, looks through the rectangular window and sees another girl dancing.

The girl spins and Nina sees her face. It's Lily!

Nina looks on, in horror. She tries to open the door, but it's locked.

She tugs violently. Finally, a CORPS DANCER opens the door, holds up her finger over her mouth to quiet Nina.

Nina pushes past her.

76 INT. LARGE REHEARSAL SPACE- SAME

76

She makes a beeline for Brennan, looking beyond apologetic.

The dancers and piano player stop at the interruption.

BRENNAN

Keep going. Let's finish the section.

The piano music resumes, and the dancers pick up where they left off.

Nina meets Lily's eyes. She makes a sorry face, but then continues dancing.

Nina is forced to watch from the sidelines as Lily and David finish the Black Swan's Pas de Deux.

The other dancers politely clap. David whispers something into Lily's ear. She pulls back, laughing flirtatiously.

They look to Brennan to get his feedback.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Very good.

He turns to Nina and his smile fades.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Get warmed up. Company, take 10.

Brennan walks towards Nina.

NINA

Michael-

He walks straight past and out of the room, ignoring her.

Nina makes a beeline for the barre, glanced at by some of the dancers.

Lily approaches, holding out the practice tutu.

LILY

Hey, sorry.

Nina snatches it, avoiding eye contact. She puts it on.

LILY (CONT'D)

He wanted to go through the spacing. Asked me to step in.

Nina starts stretching.

NINA

(loaded)
I overslept.

LILY

Oops... Least you had a good time, right?

Nina doesn't answer.

LILY (CONT'D)

Hello?

NINA

You put something in my drink.

LILY

(obviously)

Yeah...

NINA

And took off this morning.

LILY

This morning? You have some kind of lezzy wet dream?

Nina's confused.

LILY (CONT'D)

Listen, I went home with Tom. We looked for you, but you must have taken off already.

NINA

(barks)

Liar!

Other dancers look over.

It's a stalemate. Nina goes back to the bar and resumes stretching.

Lily walks off.

77 INT. LARGE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

77

Nina dances the Black Swan, with the rest of the company.

Brennan watches from his post at the center of the mirror, his focus split between her and...

Lily, who stretches with the other ballerinas.

Fueled by the competition, Nina pushes herself. Her dancing becomes more aggressive.

She finishes the section, breathing deeply, covered in sweat.

She looks up to Brennan for a response. He seems pleased.

BRENNAN

Yes! At last I saw you desiring something. Really fighting for it.

She sneaks a glance at Lily who stares back at her with a dark expression.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Okay everyone, let's jump into Act four.

78

INT. COSTUME SHOP - DAY

78

Nina wears the BLACK SWAN COSTUME, staring blankly at her reflection in the mirror.

The overworked COSTUMER checks each seam, pulling the costume taut, analyzing what needs to be taken in, and what needs to be let out.

Nina looks uncomfortable, disliking the close scrutiny of her body.

Then, in the reflection, Nina sees her hand rise.

Disturbed, Nina looks at her own hand. It's completely still.

She looks back up in the mirror. The reflection scratches its shoulder vigorously.

COSTUMER

Sit *still*, I'm almost done.

Nina startles. The reflection has returned to normal, its hand back at its side.

Costumer checks one more thing, makes one more note.

COSTUMER (CONT'D)

Okay, all set.

The costumer leaves her to change. Relieved, Nina quickly takes off the costume and starts to dress in her sweats.

She hears someone enter the costume shop.

LILY (O.S.)

Hey...Michael sent me.

Nina pauses, recognizing her voice.

COSTUMER (O.S.)

Yeah, just a sec.

Nina steps out from behind the privacy curtain, and finds Lily waiting.

NINA
(to costumer)
What's she doing here?

LILY
He made me your alternate.
(can't help it)
Just in case...

Livid, Nina pushes past her.

79 INT. PRINCIPALS' DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 79

Nina angrily gets ready to go home, jamming her stuff into her bag, on the verge of a breakdown.

A group of dancers walk past her door, chatting. Nina catches a few muffled phrases: "think Lily was better," "totally," "maybe she'll take over."

Nina quickly finishes packing and exits.

80 EXT. THEATER - NIGHT 80

Nina walks across the plaza in front of the theater, heading towards the street.

She passes a row of POSTERS advertising the production of Swan Lake. They feature a beautiful portrait of Nina.

Nina stops and looks at them, both awed and overwhelmed.

Her eyes drift, noticing Brennan in the street, his arm raised to hail a cab.

Nina hurries towards him.

NINA
Michael?!

He doesn't react. A cab pulls over and Brennan opens the door.

Lily runs to him off the curb, unnoticed by Nina until now. Nina freezes.

Lily climbs in, glancing back and spotting Nina. She smirks at her and slides over, so that Brennan can get in after her.

He SLAMS shut the door and the cab pulls away.

Nina watches them go, devastated.

81 INT. UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT - NIGHT 81

Nina enters and slowly approaches her mother's bedroom door, almost as a reflex. It's closed, but the light's on underneath.

She's about to knock, but hesitates. Through the door, she can hear the sound of her mother watching an INFOMERCIAL on TV. An unfamiliar, lonely noise.

Nina stands there for a moment, just breathing. She strengthens her resolve and backs away from the door.

82 INT. NINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 82

Nina collapses on her bed. She opens the JEWELRY BOX sitting on her night stand.

Nina watches the TOY BALLERINA spin and spin.

She darkens, feeling herself being watched. She sits up.

Sees the GIGANTIC TEDDY BEAR staring at her from the corner of the room.

83 INT. APARTMENT CORRIDOR - NIGHT 83

Enraged, Nina shoves her STUFFED ANIMALS one-by-one into a TRASH CHUTE, a pile of her next victims strewn at her feet.

She grabs the GIGANTIC TEDDY BEAR next, and jams him in.

84 INT. STAGE - DAY 84

The company rehearses on the main stage for the first time.

BRENNAN

The Black Swan has stolen your
love.

Nina dances the end of the ballet in front of the nearly completed scenery.

A few PAINTERS and TECHNICIANS complete last minute touch-ups. Down in the pit, the ORCHESTRA plays.

Nina catches glimpses of Lily staring at her from the sidelines. Nina tries to block her out.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
 Only way to crush the pain is to
 end your life.

Nina climbs the stairs of the set and arrives at the "cliff," stopping at the precipice.

Nina looks down. It's a short drop to a stack of pads, but a HARD FLOOR surrounds it.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
 You look at the Prince, to say good
 bye. And then...Jump!

She hesitates, fearful.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
 Go ahead. You'll be fine.

Nina takes a breath and leaps in a swan dive.

She falls...and lands in the pads, unhurt.

BRENNAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 The end... Thank you, company. I'll
 see you all tomorrow.

Nina lies in the pads, completely exhausted. Brennan runs to her and offers a hand to help her up.

She takes his hand and he hoists her up. She looks at him with an intense yearning.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
 You're almost there. I felt it.

NINA
 I'd like to keep working.

BRENNAN
 Tonight?

She places his hand around her waist.

NINA
 (seductive)
 I want to work with you.

BRENNAN
 Tonight's not for us.

NINA
You're seeing Lily.

BRENNAN
Nina...

She darkens and pulls away from him.

NINA
She wants my role

BRENNAN
Every ballerina in the world wants
your role.

Nina stays quiet, shut down.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Look, it doesn't matter what Lily
wants. Only what I want.

NINA
Do you want *me*?

He gives her a sly smile.

NINA (CONT'D)
What do I have to do?

BRENNAN
Just give a great performance
tomorrow night. That's all. Then
everything will be yours.

She looks away, frustrated.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Now, take a moment alone, do it
once. For yourself. Then go home
and try to rest.

He gives her a gentle kiss on the cheek.

She doesn't look at him. He walks away, leaving her to
suffer.

Nina practices the Black Swan, alone with the jaded piano
player, working herself hard.

He suddenly stops playing.

NINA
What happened?

PIANO PLAYER
I gotta life, deary.

He closes the music book and stands.

PIANO PLAYER (CONT'D)
Don't work too hard. It's your big
day tomorrow.

Annoyed, she watches him leave. She faces herself in the
mirror.

NINA
Okay. For myself.

She hears her voice come back to her like a slight echo. She
looks around -- strange. She takes a breath.

She resumes dancing without music, her feet CLICKING on the
floor.

As she moves, she notices something strange out of the corner
of her eye:

The reflection's dancing lags a little behind hers.

Nina stops. The sound of her footsteps stops a second later.
She stares at the mirror...troubled.

The door to the room BANGS shut.

She whips towards it and she's suddenly plunged into
DARKNESS.

Freaked, she stumbles towards the door, and pushes out into
the

86

INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY

86

Where it's equally dark. Lit only by the red EXIT SIGNS.

NINA (CONT'D)
Hey! Hey! I'm still in here.

She sees a shadow move at one end of the hallway. She chases
after it.

NINA (CONT'D)
Hey! Turn the lights back on!

She gets to the end of the hallway, but it seems empty in both directions. Quiet.

But she hears the faint sound of MUFFLED BANGING.

NINA (CONT'D)

Hello?

No one answers.

She heads in the direction of the noise. Finds the door to the COSTUME SHOP slightly ajar. The banging now accompanied by a GIGGLE.

87 INT. COSTUME SHOP - CONTINUOUS

87

Nina sneaks inside. It's pretty dark but the sound is unmistakable: two people going at it.

Nina tiptoes past a MANNEQUIN wearing the creepy ROTHBART COSTUME.

She gently pulls apart dangling costumes, peeks through...

Catches a glimpse of Brennan fucking Lily. She's wild, clearly enjoying it.

Nina looks away, disgusted. She peeks back one more time.

Now he's thrusting into the Double. She meets Nina's eyes and smiles.

Nina jumps back, knocking over a mannequin. The lovemaking pauses.

Nina flees.

88 INT. ST. LUKE'S ROOSEVELT HOSPITAL - NIGHT

88

Nina slowly enters Beth's room, but remains at the threshold.

Beth sits in a wheelchair, her legs jutting out in front of her, facing towards the window.

Nina thinks about leaving, but gets up the nerve and walks further in.

NINA

Beth?

Beth glances at her.

NINA (CONT'D)
It's me. Nina.

Beth looks away, continues filing her nails with an EMORY BOARD.

NINA (CONT'D)
I know you must hate me, but I just wanted to say I'm sorry.

Nina sits on the bed.

NINA (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry if I made you feel this way. It's happening to me now.

Beth ignores her. Nina can't help but get it all out.

NINA (CONT'D)
She's trying to take my place. I'm scared I won't be able to dance tomorrow. She's going to do something... She already is.

BETH
Mmm-hmm.

NINA
What do I do? What do I do?

Beth starts giggling. Nina flashes anger.

NINA (CONT'D)
Stop.

BETH
You got what you wanted...

NINA
No.

BETH
(taunting)
Sweet girl.

NINA
(not sure)
What?

Beth spins around. She looks like a bruised version of THE DOUBLE!

DOUBLE
SWEET GIRL! SWEET GIRL!

The Double starts stabbing herself in the face with the sharp EMORY BOARD, tearing the flesh.

Nina grabs the Double's hand and struggles to restrain her.

NINA
Stop it! Don't!

The emory board slices into Nina's arm. Freaked, Nina flees.

89 INT. HALLWAY 89

She BANGS into a empty stretcher sitting in the hallway, causing a CLAMOR.

The older nurse looks up.

Nina runs into an open elevator.

90 INT. HOSPITAL ELEVATOR - SAME 90

Nina hits the "Ground Floor" BUTTON, and hides in the corner.

As The doors close, she looks down and sees that, in one hand, she holds the BLOODY EMORY BOARD.

She drops it, disgusted.

91 INT. UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT - NIGHT 91

Nina runs in and quickly shuts the door behind her.

She escapes down the hall.

NINA
Mommy?!

92 INT. ERICA'S BEDROOM 92

Nina flings open the door, but Erica's not in there.

She hears RUSTLING, then WHISPERING.

Nina looks around the room. The pictures of herself seem to move slightly. Blink. Mouths move.

They whisper: "Sweet girl" and then start chanting "My turn, my turn, my turn!"

Nina starts frantically tearing all the photographs and articles off the wall. Trying to silence the voices.

ERICA (O.S.)
What are you doing?!!

Nina whips around, sees her mother standing aghast in the doorway.

Nina pushes past her, in a frenzy.

93

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

93

Nina closes the door. Engages the latch.

A pain shoots through her shoulder. She SCREAMS, instinctively reaching for it.

She quickly yanks off the sweater and looks at the vanity mirror.

Her back pulsates unnaturally. Tiny black tips poke through.

Erica starts POUNDING on the door.

Nina grabs the nearest heavy object--the JEWELRY BOX--and hurls it at the glass. The mirror spider-webs with cracks.

ERICA (O.S.)
Open up!

NINA
GO AWAY!

She digs into an open bump on her shoulder with her fingernails.

The door opens and catches.

ERICA
Unlock the fucking door!!!

Erica violently pushes, trying to bust the latch.

Nina concentrates, takes hold of the growth and yanks.

Nina looks at the object held in her fingers: a sharp, TINY BLACK SPINE. Like that of a sea urchin. Damp, feathery wisps hang off of it.

She looks up into the mirror. Powerful RED EYES with an expanding DARK PUPIL stare back at her.

The door flings open. Erica rushes in and finds Nina half-naked, her skin inflamed.

ERICA (CONT'D)

Oh my god...

NINA

Get out!

Nina starts forcing her mother out the door. Erica pushes back.

ERICA

Stop it! You're sick! Let me take care of you!

NINA

Get OUT!

She manages to get her mother almost all the way out the door.

Only Erica's hand gripping the door frame.

Nina SLAMS the door, SMASHING the hand.

Erica SCREAMS in pain.

Nina slams the door again, and again.

She finally gets the door all the way shut.

She stumbles back...

Accidentally tripping on the fallen jewelry box.

She falls and SLAMS her head into the radiator.

SMASH TO BLACK.

TINNY MUSIC plays in the darkness.

FADE IN:

94

INT. NINA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

94

Nina flutters open her eyes. The world comes into focus and she sees her mother hovering over her, stroking her hair.

ERICA

Sshh, shhh, it's okay. I'm here.

Nina looks around, disoriented. Sees her hands jammed inside thick socks, held on by rubber bands. Groggy, she tries to pull them off.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Just while you sleep, to stop you.

Nina weakly tries to sit up, but Erica pushes her back down. Nina sees her mother's bandaged hand.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Rest. *Sssh*, rest.

Nina gives in, too tired to fight her. Her eyes drift to the source of the tinny music: the jewelry box sits open on her night stand.

The ballerina's been broken off, all that remains is a single amputated leg, spinning morbidly on the base.

ERICA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
That's good. Rest.

Nina's eyes drift to the alarm clock. It's gone.

NINA
Where's the clock?

ERICA
Don't worry.

Nina looks at the dark window.

NINA
It's dark. What night is it?

Nina reads Erica's face. Reality clicks in.

NINA (CONT'D)
(panicking)
What time is it?!

Nina tries to sit up, but her mother pushes her back down.

NINA (CONT'D)
I have to go.

ERICA
Don't worry. I called the theater.
I let them know you weren't feeling well.

Nina freaks, struggles more violently.

NINA
No, I want to.

ERICA
Lie down!

NINA
Get off me!

Nina squirms free of Erica's grasp and gets out of bed. She gets to the door...

But the doorknob's been knocked-off, leaving just a metal post sticking out of the hole. Nina tries to turn in with her bare hand, but can't.

ERICA
We're staying in here until you
feel better.

Nina panics, grips the metal post and pulls and pulls, shaking the door, but it stays locked.

ERICA (CONT'D)
This role has hurt you. I miss my
sweet girl.

Nina shoots her a hateful stare and then grabs the music box off the night stand.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Stop it.

Nina SMASHES the box into the post, trying to knock the doorknob out the other side.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Don't!

Erica rushes to pull her away from the door. Nina fights her off, holding the box as if to smash her.

NINA
Get away from me!

She SMACKS the door knob post again and again. It finally flies out the other side.

Erica grips her wrist, trying to hold her, but Nina turns and violently shoves Erica into the wall.

Nina flings open the door and leaves.

ERICA (O.S.)
No! Don't leave!

95 EXT. THEATER - EVENING 95

Nina approaches the theater with harried steps.

Quickly past the row of SWAN LAKE posters.

She reaches the side of the building, flings open the stage door and enters.

96 INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - EVENING 96

Nina frantically makes her way down the bustling hallway, chaotic with dancers. Excitement in the air.

She nears the soloists' dressing room.

Just outside of it, she spots a group of DANCERS excitedly chatting around a smiling Lily.

Nina stops in her tracks.

Lily glances in her direction, and her smile quickly fades into a sneer.

LILY
What the fuck are you doing here?

The other girls follow her gaze towards Nina, and their smiles turn to confusion.

BRENNAN (O.S.)
Nina?

She turns and finds that Brennan has approached from behind her.

LILY
We thought you were sick.

BRENNAN
Lily, give us a minute.

Brennan pulls Nina towards her room. Lily glares at Nina as she passes.

97 INT. PRINCIPALS' DRESSING ROOM

97

Brennan closes the door behind them. He looks at Nina, wheels spinning.

BRENNAN

Jesus, what the fuck is going on?
Are you okay?

NINA

I'm fine.

Nina goes to her wardrobe, finds her two costumes hanging. One for the White Swan, one for the Black Swan.

BRENNAN

Your mother said you couldn't do
it.

NINA

You know her, overreacting, as
usual.

BRENNAN

Nina?

She doesn't heed him, pulls out the White Swan leotard and sets it on her chair.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Nina!

NINA

What?

BRENNAN

I already asked Lily-

NINA

NO!

BRENNAN

You weren't fucking here!

NINA

Have you announced it?

He hasn't.

NINA (CONT'D)

After Beth, do you need more
controversy?

Brennan smirks at her directness.

NINA (CONT'D)
I'm here. I can do it.

He looks at her, considering.

NINA (CONT'D)
I'm ready.

Brennan still isn't convinced.

BRENNAN
If you fuck this up...

NINA
I won't.

A pause before he makes up his mind. He gives her a reluctant nod.

NINA (CONT'D)
(relieved)
Thank you.

BRENNAN
Remember, dance is now. It lives only in the present. In three hours it will be over, gone, nothing. But right now, everything is possible. Each moment can be perfect. Allow yourself to get lost in it.

He takes one last look at her and leaves. She takes a breath, relieved.

Curious, she cracks open the door and peeks outside:

98 INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY (NINA'S POV) 98

Brennan has pulled Lily down the corridor to break the news. Lily takes off, furious.

99 INT. PRINCIPALS' DRESSING ROOM 99

Nina shuts the door, and takes a breath.

She undresses, revealing her red streaked, irritated back.

Nina looks more closely in the mirror. Sees the black points barely poking through the bumps.

She slips on her tights and White Swan costume. Fortunately, it hides her "condition."

100 INT. PRINCIPLE'S DRESSING ROOM- LATER 100

Through the PA, music from ACT 1 plays.

Nina sits at her vanity, smears a thick layer of white makeup on her face, her chest, and upper shoulders. Every bit of exposed skin.

She applies eye-shadow and dark eye-liner. Some dark-red lipstick.

She pulls her hair back into a bun and pins it in place.

Once she's done, she places the White Swan's FEATHER CROWN around her head.

She studies herself in the mirror, in full White Swan regalia. She looks pale and fragile, a scared porcelain doll.

The STAGE MANAGER'S voice comes through the PA speaker:

STAGE MANAGER (V.O.)
Act 2's starting. Five minutes.

She closes her eyes and takes deep breaths, focusing.

101 INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT 101

Nina stands nervously in the wings, awaiting her entrance.

She peeks out through a small hole in the wall, sees the AUDIENCE sitting expectantly in their seats.

The music begins and they shift and mumber in anticipation.

Nina pulls away, taking deep breaths and clenching her hands, trying to stay calm.

On stage, David enters, beginning the Act. He traverses the stage, "hunting" with a crossbow.

STAGEHAND
(to Nina)
Go.

Nina takes a last breath and runs on.

102 STAGE 102

Under the spotlight, she begins dancing her intro.

David runs towards her and she startles away from him, afraid.

He grabs her and they begin their first Pas de Deux.

103 INT. BACKSTAGE - LATER

103

Nina comes offstage, catching her breath. All around her, CORPS MEMBERS dressed as little swans rush back on stage, where FOUR LITTLE SWANS begin the Pas de Quatre.

Nina looks into the opposite wing and sees Brennan watching her. He gives her a small, contented nod, then disappears behind a swarm of dancers.

Among them, Nina catches a glimpse of David, sweaty, laughing and flirting with someone. Nina can't see who, her view obscured by moving bodies and limbs.

Suspicious, Nina moves to get a better look.

Revealing that David's speaking with Nina's DOUBLE.

Nina freaks.

Then, all at once, the four little swans on stage look at her, each her Double!

Nina stumbles back, bumping into the stagehand.

STAGEHAND

What are you doing? That's you!

He gently pushes her, and she has to run back on.

104 STAGE

104

Frantic, Nina tiptoes on point, undulating her arms like wings. Her back to the audience.

All the little swans are frozen in two rows on each side of the stage, looking downstage.

Nina turns, finds David, prostrated in front of her.

Nina looks at him, distraught. She leans forward, propped up by his hand on her stomach, and lifts one leg straight up in an arabesque penchée.

David launches Nina into the air, hands around her waist.

He slowly turns her around, keeping her held high.

From her swirling, bird's eye view, Nina sees the rows of Little Swans facing her...

Each looks like her Double!

Nina freaks, jerking her body.

David's grip SLIPS.

And Nina SLAMS onto the stage.

It's a horrific moment that feels like an eternity.

Gritting her teeth, Nina looks up around her, sees the faces of the other ballerinas. Not her Double, but in their identical makeup and costumes, they all look disturbingly alike. Staring at her sadistically.

Nina finds Lily, glancing at David. He snaps to and quickly helps Nina up.

She's beyond freaked. His look is cold.

They resume dancing, Nina barely keeping it together.

105

INT. BACKSTAGE - LATER

105

At the end of the Act, Nina rushes off stage. She breaks down, hyperventilating. The dancer playing ROTHBART eyes her with concern.

ROTHBART

You alright?

She looks up, sees his creepy MASK, and quickly backs away.

Other CORPS MEMBERS surround her, chirping "You okay?", "What happened?" etc.

Dazed, Nina turns from them and sees Brennan on stage chewing David out, behind the closed curtain.

David spots Nina, glares at her, and sulks away.

Brennan runs his fingers through his hair, his back to Nina.

Nina cautiously approaches.

NINA

It wasn't my fault. He *dropped* me.

He can't even look at her.

BRENNAN
 (raging)
 What a fucking disaster!

He walks away.

Nina's all alone, abandoned. She sees everyone backstage looking at her.

She runs, escaping their stares.

106 INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - LATER 106

Nina quickly moves through a mirrored hallway, desperately seeking refuge in her dressing room.

Her Doubles mock her through the reflections.

DOUBLE
 My turn!

OTHER DOUBLE
 My turn!

Nina shoots into her

107 INT. PRINCIPLE'S DRESSING ROOM- SAME 107

She closes the door behind her, ready to cry.

DOUBLE (O.S.)
 Hey...

She looks up, and finds the Double casually sitting on the edge of her vanity, wearing the Black Swan costume.

NINA
 Get out of here.

The Double faces her; she's now Lily.

LILY
 Rough start, huh? Pretty humiliating...

NINA
 Get out.

LILY
 Wow...rude.

Lily coyly smiles, gets off the counter.

LILY (CONT'D)

I'm worried about the next act. Not sure you're feeling up to it.

NINA

Stop. Just stop.

LILY

How about...I dance the Black Swan for you?

NINA

No.

Lily looks back at Nina, now turned back into the Double.

DOUBLE

But it's my turn.

NINA

Don't.

The Double just laughs at her.

Nina's fury rises up from inside.

NINA (CONT'D)

Leave me alone!!!

She charges the Double.

They crash into a WALL LENGTH MIRROR, shattering it. Shards fall everywhere.

LILY flips Nina over and wails on her. Punch after punch.

Nina does her best to block the onslaught.

They scuffle, knocking things over, bumping into walls.

The DOUBLE gets her hands around Nina's neck...

Nina tries to pull the hands free, but she's too strong.

LILY squeezes down.

LILY

"She wasn't good enough. Couldn't handle the spotlight."

Nina's neck starts to stretch, her eyes bulge, running out of oxygen.

Her hands frantically scramble along the surface of the vanity...

LILY (CONT'D)

That's what they'll say. And
they'll forget all about you.

Nina's fingers find the edge of a MIRROR SHARD, but can't grasp it. They stretch...and pick it up.

Nina looks at Lily, her eyes RED and BLACK. Like those of a swan.

And she DRIVES the shard into her stomach.

Stunned, Lily looks down.

She touches the wound, sees blood on her fingers.

NINA

It's my turn.

The DOUBLE looks up at Nina and smiles.

She coughs up blood and collapses onto the floor.

Nina stares down at her, breathing heavily, high on adrenaline. Her eyes slowly turn from black back into their normal, human color.

A KNOCK on the door.

STAGE MANAGER (O.S.)

Black Swan, places in 5.

Nina drags the stiffening body into the wardrobe closet.

108 INT. PRINCIPALS' DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 108

Nina zips up the back to the Black Swan costume.

She deliberately applies the Black Swan makeup. Dark eye shadow and rouge, maroon lipstick.

Dressed in black and wearing the dark make-up of the Black Swan, she looks fierce.

109 INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - LATER 109

Nina exits from her dressing room.

She takes slow, steady steps towards the wings. She sees Veronica and Galina whisper to each other and snicker as she passes, but she presses on, unaffected.

110 INT. BACKSTAGE - LATER 110

She stands in the wings, Act 3 already in progress on stage. She closes her eyes, takes deep breaths. Focusing herself. David comes up behind her.

DAVID
About the fall, I'm sorry. It was
ac-

NINA
(without looking)
Shhh.

Their cue arrives, and she bursts onto

111 STAGE 111

As the Black Swan.

She opens her eyes. They've turned back into red and black swan eyes.

They lock onto David. She looks powerful, intense as she moves towards him.

His face shows his surprise.

Nina dances the Pas de Deux with him, and exits into the wings hand in hand when they're finished.

DAVID
Wow. What's happened to you?

She doesn't have enough air in her lungs to respond.

He backs off, not wanting to mess with her "focus."

Alone, she looks at her arms, sees black points trying to push through again.

Some fully emerge as shiny BLACK FEATHERS.

She just watches them, not panicking, but accepting the transformation taking place. Even beckoning it.

Her second entrance cue is played, and she leaps back on.

It is time for the Coda. She takes a brief pause, closing her eyes once more, and then completely lets herself go.

She spins with ferocity. More BLACK FEATHERS burst out from her shoulders and back.

At last, she truly embodies the Black Swan.

She finishes the Coda, punctuating her last spin with a sharp step that echoes through the theater.

The audience looks on, mesmerized. Too stunned to clap at first.

Nina looks down at the stage, her face glazed with sweat. She has returned to normal. No feathers. Normal eyes. A woman.

She finally looks up at the audience, and they ERUPT in a standing ovation.

Nina walks to the front of the stage, takes her bow.

Nina looks up at the MASS OF BODIES filling the auditorium, vibrating with applause.

Proud, Nina smiles and bows again. Again and again.

She finally runs off stage, the applause still going strong.

112

BACKSTAGE

112

Nina enters the wings, other dancers cheer loudly. She pushes past all the smiling faces. It feels very surreal.

She sees Brennan clapping and shaking his head. Blown away.

BRENNAN

Get back out there! Get back-

She stops his mouth with a kiss. The kind of kiss that you can't stop. Not desperate, but adamant.

The other dancers titter and back away.

Finally she disengages, staring at him in the eyes, but before he can say anything...

She turns and leaves him, without another look. He's stunned. Like he's been run over by a truck.

113 INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY 113

She walks towards her dressing room, a satisfied smile on her face. The hallway mirror just a mirror. No unruly reflections.

She gets to her room and her smile fades. Remembering what's inside.

She opens the door, makes sure no ones looking, and enters quickly.

114 INT. PRINCIPALS' DRESSING ROOM 114

She closes the door behind her, locks it. Turns and sees the broken glass all over the floor.

She eyes the closed wardrobe. A pool of blood drips out from under the door.

She picks up a towel and lays it over the blood.

She starts to undress.

115 INT. PRINCIPALS' DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 115

Back in the White Swan costume, she re-applies the makeup.

She hurries, but sees that her hands are shaking. She stares at them, the reality of what she's done starting to sink in.

There's a KNOCK on the door. She looks towards it, her face only halfway made-up.

NINA

One second.

She goes to the door, opens it just a crack.

She peeks through and finds...

LILY looking back at her.

LILY

(begrudging)

Hey...you were amazing.

Nina's petrified.

LILY (CONT'D)

Seriously. I'm sorry things got so fucked up between us.

(MORE)

LILY (CONT'D)
Anyway, Michael asked me to tell
you that. So here I am.

Nina barely manages a nod.

LILY (CONT'D)
Okay...well...I'll let you finish.
Merde.

Lily turns and walks away.

Panic setting in, Nina swiftly shuts the door.

She turns around, stares at the wardrobe.

She steps cautiously towards it, her face repeated
countlessly in all the reflective shards.

She lifts the towel from the ground and looks at it.

It is clean. No blood. She looks down at the floor. No blood
there either.

Worried, she slowly opens the door to the wardrobe...

And finds it empty. No body whatsoever.

She looks over at the broken mirror. Sees her reflection
staring back at her.

She stares at it for a long beat, and realizes something.

She touches her stomach and winces a little. Pulls back her
hand. It's coated with red liquid. Blood.

It's started to soak through the costume, creating a faint
red spot. The fabric is ripped at the center of the stain.

She takes it off, to confirm her fear.

And discovers a stab wound, in her own stomach.

She feels inside and pulls out the sharp tip of mirror still
stuck inside. Blood begins flowing more rapidly.

She drops the mirror.

STAGE MANAGER (V.O.)
(On the PA)
White Swan in 5.

In a daze, Nina zips the costume back up.

She sits down at the vanity, and finishes applying the rest of the White Swan's makeup.

CUT TO:

116 INT. STAGE - LATER

116

Nina dances the final Pas de Deux as the White Swan. Losing blood by the second, everything is woozy and blurry.

She can't do all the steps, but her performance is pained, making it somehow poignant.

David leans close.

DAVID

You okay?

She's silent, her expression serene.

Even as a spot of red begins to soak through at the center of her costume.

The music turns ominous, and VON ROTHBART, the evil sorcerer, comes onto stage.

Nina dances away from him, back upstage, towards the cliff. It's time for her final leap.

Her energy fading, she teeters up the stairs of the set. One step at a time...

She gets to the top, takes one last look around, at all the eyes watching her.

She notices a familiar face in the audience: HER MOTHER. She watches with a profound sadness, tears streaking her cheeks.

In the front of her costume, a dark circle has started to form. Her blood fully seeping through.

And Nina leaps...

INTO BLACKNESS

Nina falls through space, her eyes closed.

Falling through an endless void.

She slowly twists around in the air, so that she's falling backwards.

She hears something. Soft and muffled.

The faint sound of applause.

She lands slowly and comfortably on the padding placed behind the scenery.

The sound of applause is now loud, uproarious.

A group of BALLERINAS surround the mattress, clapping for her, each one dressed as a WHITE SWAN.

Brennan pushes through the group to get to her.

BRENNAN

That was perfect! It was like the fucking role took over! Listen to them! Get up, get up!

Nina is too weak to move.

NINA

Was I good?

BRENNAN

Good?! You were fucking transcendent! I've never seen dancing like that. You saved us! You fucking saved us! Go take your bow! They're waiting for you.

NINA

Thank you.

BRENNAN

I always knew you had it in you, my little princess.

NINA

What?

BRENNAN

They love you.

Lily pushes her way into the group and GASPS, pointing at Nina's abdomen.

Brennan follows her gaze and discovers the spot of blood, which has grown in size.

He looks back at her, sees the life almost gone.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

What happened?

NINA

What did you call me?

Nina searches the faces surrounding her. Finds Lily, her face frozen with terror.

BRENNAN (O.S.)

Someone, get help.

NINA

Michael, what did you call me?

Brennan strokes her face.

BRENNAN (O.S.)

What have we done, my little princess?

NINA

(weak)

Your little princess...

Nina smiles.

The APPLAUSE grows more and more faint. Her eyes glaze over and everything goes completely SILENT.

Nina lies there motionless, a smile frozen on her face.

CUT TO BLACK.