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More Than Anything

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More Than Anything

A Screenplay

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Film & Television,
Loyola Marymount University of Los Angeles, California

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Fine Arts

By

Cassie Mae Hess

This feature length screenplay written by

Cassie Mae Hess

under the guidance of a faculty committee from the School of Film & Television at Loyola Marymount University, and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Graduate School in partial fulfillment of the thesis requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting.

Advanced Screenplay Project Committee:

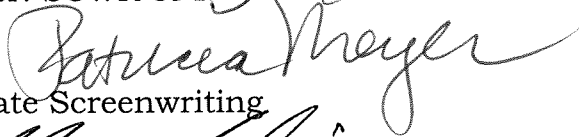
Committee Chair: SCWR 690



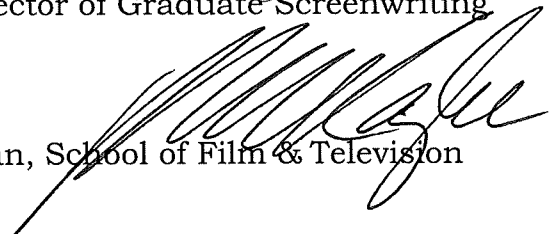
Committee Member: SCWR 691



Director of Graduate Screenwriting



Dean, School of Film & Television



Date 5/9/19

MORE THAN ANYTHING

Written By

Cassie Mae Hess

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FADE IN:

INT. THE KENNEDY CENTER - MAIN STAGE - NIGHT

TWO DANCERS perform a romantic pas de deux on stage.

FREDDY SPARKS, 20, white, picture perfect, haunted, waits in the wings for her cue.

Freddy's eyes follow the placement of the Male Dancer's hands: One on the small of the Female Dancer's back, one on the inside of her leg, both grip her waist tightly as they lift her body into the air.

A PAIR OF HANDS

Massage Freddy's shoulders.

Freddy sees the AUDIENCE applaud as the Dancers finish, but everything sounds MUTED in her ears.

She stiffens as SOMEONE leans in and whispers into her ear.

SOMEONE

Smile. After tonight you'll be one
of The Company's leading ladies.
After tonight you'll be *my* star.

Freddy plasters on a smile that doesn't reach her eyes. Contemporary music plays, and Freddy takes to the stage.

The MUSIC RISES back to a NORMAL VOLUME, and she throws herself into the steps.

The Audience watches her with bated breath. Several people record her performance on their phones.

Freddy's partner, KYLE, 24, dedicated, no-nonsense, joins her on stage.

Her practiced smile falters slightly.

As Kyle places his hands on her body the MUSIC ROARS and climbs to a NEAR DEAFENING VOLUME.

Freddy continues to dance, but her smile falls away and her face becomes completely emotionless.

Kyle lifts her into the air.

SILENCE.

Freddy pushes away from Kyle, and he drops her.

Panic overcomes her as Freddy curls in on herself and bursts into uncontrollable sobs.

Kyle reaches out to help her, but she slaps his hands away.

Freddy rocks back and forth as she gasps for air. Her arms form an X over her chest as she digs her nails into her shoulders.

DANCERS and STAFF run on stage.

Complete chaos.

Phones record from all over the audience...

FEMALE DIRECTOR (PRE-LAP)
That will be all.

INT. BALLET STUDIO - DAY

...Freddy's meltdown plays on a phone situated on a stack of Dancer Resumes with attached photos.

A FEMALE DIRECTOR slides the phone over the top of FREDDY'S RESUME to her ASSISTANT.

Freddy, now a year old and even more haunted, watches the exchange with a growing sense of defeat.

FREDDY
Please, just let me--

FEMALE DIRECTOR
--Next.

Freddy bites her tongue as the studio door opens and a FEMALE DANCER enters.

Freddy gives a quick, respectful bow, and leaves without another word.

INT. HALF-BREWED COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Freddy, late, slides behind the counter and grabs the apron that WILDER EVANS, 24, African American, kind-hearted, witty, humorous, throws to her.

Her boss, DAVID, 38, overbearing, spots her from across the shop and charges over.

She kicks her bag out of the way and ties her apron on as David steps behind the counter.

DAVID
You're late.

Wilder moves forward and plants himself between David and Freddy. Freddy instinctively takes a few steps back.

WILDER
Didn't I tell you I was covering
the first part of her shift?

DAVID
You can only cover her shift if you
aren't already scheduled. Get back
to work.

Wilder gives Freddy an apologetic look as he returns to the list of orders.

David turns to Freddy for an explanation.

FREDDY
My audition ran over. I'm sorry. It
won't happen again.

DAVID
That's what you said last time.

FREDDY
Yes, but this time I mean it.

DAVID
Last warning. One more misstep--

David takes a step forward, and Freddy takes one back to maintain the distance.

FREDDY
--And I'll spend my Saturday nights
doing inventory for the next month?

DAVID
You'll be fired.

FREDDY
Understood.

David heads out from behind the counter, but he hovers in the background as he watches Freddy and Wilder work.

Wilder hands Freddy a cup, and his fingertips accidentally brush against her hand.

She drops the cup.

A moment of awkwardness as they both reach for it and Freddy instinctively pulls away.

WILDER

My bad.

He places a new cup on the counter between them.

Freddy blushes slightly as she grabs it and reads the instructions.

FREDDY

You are pretty clumsy sometimes.

Freddy goes into relevé as she reaches for something on a high shelf.

WILDER

Consider yourself lucky. If we all had the grace of a dancer those little moves of yours wouldn't be so impressive.

FREDDY

I have no idea what you're talking about.

Freddy grand pliés as she grabs milk out of the fridge beneath the counter.

WILDER

Okay, now you're showing off.

FREDDY

You should see what I can do in pointe shoes.

WILDER

I'm free tonight if you want to show me?

Freddy knocks over the open container of milk and spills it.

Wilder grabs a towel as he moves to wipe it up and accidentally bumps into Freddy's hip as he passes her.

She quickly backs up until she hits the counter on the opposite side.

FREDDY

I'm actually busy tonight.

WILDER

Maybe another time then.

FREDDY
 (smiles)
 Maybe.

Freddy turns away from Wilder and her smile falls as she grips the counter tightly.

INT. SHILOH'S STUDIO - NIGHT

MUSIC plays as Freddy, sweaty and tired, practices a solo in front of a set of old and slightly moldy mirrors.

Freddy falls out of a turn and forces her next movement in an attempt to correct it.

SHILOH (O.S.)
 Bed. Food. Water.

The music shuts off, and Freddy turns to see SHILOH HENLEY, 22, Asian American, rational, protective, quick-tempered, with the stereo remote in his hand.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
 I don't care what order, but I want
 you to indulge in all three before
 I see you in here again.

Freddy monitors her form in the mirror and marks the steps.

FREDDY
 I promise I will, but after I
 finish this.

Shiloh leans against the barre.

SHILOH
 I thought we agreed that you should
 take a break from auditioning?

FREDDY
 No, you decided it was too much for
 me, and I stopped telling you that
 I was auditioning.

SHILOH
 Why didn't you at least talk to me
 about it?

Freddy stalks over to him.

FREDDY
 Because I don't need you to hold my
 hand. I can do this on my own.

She grabs the remote, but he keeps his grip.

SHILOH

From what I recall it's pretty hard
to partner on your own.

The remote hovers between them.

FREDDY

What are you trying to say?

SHILOH

If you are going to insist on doing
this I really think you should try
to talk to someone.

Freddy yanks the remote away from him.

FREDDY

There's nothing to talk about.

She turns back to the mirror.

SHILOH

Emote it through dance then.

FREDDY

Very funny.

SHILOH

Freddy, I just want to help you.

FREDDY

Then move out of my mirror.

Freddy stares at his reflection in the mirror, but Shiloh
stays put.

Annoyed, Freddy restarts the MUSIC.

Shiloh pushes away from the barre in frustration.

SHILOH

I know you think you can do this by
yourself, but you don't have to.

Freddy watches his reflection walk out.

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - THE COMPANY - DAY

The romantic and historical feeling of The Company's architecture does little to temper the imposing nature of the large banners that hang off the building with promotional photos and information about their upcoming season.

INT. THE COMPANY - BOARD ROOM - DAY

SEAMUS RHODES, 63, white, silver-fox, well-spoken, and relentless, gives a spiel to a table of BOARD MEMBERS.

SEAMUS

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board,
I can assure you that no one has
The Company's best interest at
heart quite like I do. I've passed
through these halls as a dancer,
ballet master, patron, and, well, I
hope you can see how natural it
would feel to add artistic director
to that list.

Several of the Board Members laugh good-naturedly, but most shuffle papers awkwardly or remain stone-faced.

Seamus looks around questioningly.

ROB, 50s, apologetic, puts Seamus out of his misery.

ROB

Seamus, there's no question that
you've been an asset to The Company
for many years. And you've made
some progress in rehabilitating The
Company's image since that
unfortunate incident with Freddy
Sparks at the gala. But, we're
afraid it's not enough.

SEAMUS

Not enough? If there is anything
else I can possibly do, please
consider it done.

KIRA, 40s, matter-of-fact, jumps in.

KIRA

The fact is we're losing our
status. It shouldn't come as a
surprise to you that there has been
a lack of interest from the new
generation.

SEAMUS

Of course, but I have--

KIRA

--And with this viral video turning away our regular audience, The Company is not where it should be.

SEAMUS

You have no need to doubt that I can get us back to that level. The wheels are already in motion.

KIRA

That's commendable, certainly, but this has far surpassed just getting The Company back up to its normal level in sales.

SEAMUS

I'm afraid I don't understand.

ROB

Ever since the incident at the gala there has been unending suspicion surrounding The Company and its practices.

KIRA

Your practices in particular.

Seamus pauses at that. He stands and crosses to a side board with a pitcher of water. He pours himself a glass.

SEAMUS

I assure you the Board has no need to doubt my capabilities in handling this matter.

ROB

Don't take it personally, Seamus. It's our job to focus on the future of The Company.

KIRA

And we think that it might lie with someone who isn't so tied into how we have always worked.

ROB

Yes, new blood is definitely an option for everyone to consider.

Seamus takes his seat once again and talks his way through as his mind reels for a solution.

SEAMUS

Of course, I can see the value in that. But I would argue that the Board hasn't given me an opportunity to prove that I can fix the lingering scandals. Let's not end the discussion here.

Seamus looks at each Board Member in turn, and makes a wide, encompassing gesture with his hands.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

Give me a chance to clear my own name and prove my worth to you.

The Board Members turn to one another and silently come to a decision. They stand and file out, but Kira turns to Seamus.

KIRA

You better wow us.

Seamus' face clouds as the door shuts behind her.

INT. PITTSBURGH BALLET - STUDIO - DAY

Freddy dances for a panel of awestruck JUDGES. Each one wholly invested in her performance.

They applaud as she ends. Freddy tries to hide her surprise.

The MALE DIRECTOR gushes.

MALE DIRECTOR

That was absolutely stunning. You are truly an amazing young dancer.

FREDDY

(breathless)

Thank you. I'm glad you liked me.

MALE DIRECTOR

My dear, we loved you. You are truly a talented soloist, but if you don't mind we would like to see how you partner.

Freddy's smile falters as she looks out at the Judges. They watch her curiously.

FREDDY

Of course. I'd be happy to.

An ASSISTANT pokes her head into the hall and returns with a MALE DANCER.

Freddy flashes him a smile as he approaches, but she makes no move to greet him.

MALE DIRECTOR

Freddy, are you familiar with the grand pas de deux from Don Quixote?

(off her nod)

Fantastic. Whenever you two are ready.

The Judges watch them patiently, and Freddy takes a deep breath as her partner takes his place behind her.

The Assistant starts the MUSIC, and Freddy rises onto pointe as her partner places his hands on her hips.

He lifts her perfectly, but Freddy stumbles as she comes back down. He tightens his grip on her hips to catch her and pull her back into position.

Freddy struggles into a low and uncontrolled arabesque as her mind FLASHES:

A pair of hands grip Freddy's hips possessively.

She resists, but the hands pull her back roughly.

One of the hands twists to the inside of her thigh.

BACK in the moment the judges watch uncertainly as Freddy pulls away from her partner's grip in a panic.

She runs out of the room.

INT. PITTSBURGH BALLET - BATHROOM - DAY

Freddy sits on the floor of a bathroom stall. Her arms form an X over her chest and tears stream down her face.

She shuts her eyes as she fights to control her breathing. Shaky sobs escape her.

The bathroom door opens and someone enters.

Freddy quickly curls in on herself even more and fights to stay silent.

Her nails dig into her shoulders, drawing blood, as she holds it all in.

INT. HALF-BREWED COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Freddy runs in to find David in an apron behind the counter. He helps a customer with a smile on his face, but as soon as he spots Freddy that smile disappears.

FREDDY

I am so sorry--

DAVID

--Don't bother. Just get out.

FREDDY

David, please. I promise this is the absolute last time.

DAVID

I warned you, Freddy. I've been warning you for months. You're too unreliable to keep on.

FREDDY

Please, you don't--

David turns to take another order.

INT. THE COMPANY - SEAMUS' OFFICE - DAY

Seamus paces around his meticulous office as he stewes.

His assistant, CELESTE, 33, Asian American, clever, and reserved, sits calmly as she tries to problem solve.

CELESTE

We knew that some of the Board Members would be hard to persuade. Kira most of all.

SEAMUS

All they want is a scapegoat and they have no qualms about giving *that* position to me.

CELESTE

The Board is under fire right now to get rid of suspicion. Every move they make is going to be scrutinized.

(MORE)

CELESTE (CONT'D)

You can't blame them for wanting to make sure they are making the right choice.

Seamus pauses in his pacing.

SEAMUS

Do you think I'm the wrong one?

CELESTE

(tense)

Of course not.

After a beat, Seamus continues to pace.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

There has to be some way to make yourself invaluable. A way to prove that The Company needs you.

SEAMUS

Of course The Company needs me, Celeste. This place would crumble without me.

CELESTE

It's already crumbling.

SEAMUS

(snaps)

Then I'll have to be the one to put it back together.

Seamus freezes. His mind reels.

CELESTE

That's all fine and good, but how exactly do you plan to do that?

He moves quickly to his chair and grabs his laptop.

SEAMUS

Leave me.

CELESTE

But the Board--

SEAMUS

--I'll take care of the Board. Go make yourself useful and finalize the details for the open calls.

Celeste purses her lips in annoyance, but bites her tongue. She leaves the office with a noticeable LIMP in her walk.

Seamus pays her no mind as he types like a man possessed.

INT. FREDDY/SHILOH'S APARTMENT - FREDDY'S ROOM - DAY

Posters of famous ballerinas and ballets coat the walls.

The open closet sports color-coordinated leotards and an organized pile of pointe shoes.

A foot-stretcher, stretch bands, leg-roller, and various other pieces of work-out equipment sit neatly in a corner.

Haphazard photos of Freddy at various points in her life plaster the mirror over the vanity.

Pictures that show Freddy:

Goofing off in class. On stage at competition. Rehearsing. Stretching. Full performance make-up. Sweaty and exhausted. Pictures of her alone. Some with friends, competitors, partners, teachers, Shiloh.

Every photo shows an infectiously happy Freddy.

In the small circle of uncovered mirror the reflection of an exhausted Freddy sits on her bed with earbuds in as she watches her laptop intently.

ON FREDDY'S LAPTOP

Camcorder footage of Freddy and Kyle's rehearsals show Freddy and Kyle as they effortlessly perform a romantic pas de deux.

Chemistry flows between them.

She leans into him as he wraps his hands around her. An unwavering connection draws them together.

His hands slide up the sides of her body.

Someone off-screen distracts them and they pull apart. They're all smiles as they listen to corrections.

An e-mail notification from The Company pops up in the corner of the screen, and Freddy hesitantly clicks on it.

"Dear Ms. Sparks, You are invited to re-audition for a position as a soloist...."

Freddy's eyes dart to the bottom of the e-mail where Seamus' signature sits boldly with the label of **Acting Director** beneath it.

FREDDY

Vehemently throws the laptop away from her.

Her mind FLASHES:

A PAIR OF HANDS

Massage Freddy's shoulders as she waits in the wings.

Seamus leans forward and whispers in her ear.

SEAMUS

Smile. After tonight you'll be one
of The Company's leading ladies.
After tonight you'll be *my* star.

BACK in the moment Freddy's breaths come short and laboured
as she panics.

INT. FREDDY/SHILOH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Shiloh cooks dinner in the kitchen as Freddy comes out of her
room. She looks a little worse for wear.

SHILOH

You're home early. Didn't you have
work today?

He absentmindedly glances her way and does a double take at
the sight of her. Shiloh quickly crosses to Freddy.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Did you have another panic attack?

Freddy flinches as he reaches to touch her.

He drops his hands and forces himself to stop a few feet in
front of her.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

What happened?

FREDDY

I got fired. I was--

SHILOH

--You were late again.

FREDDY

Yeah, I...I was--

SHILOH

--At another audition. Really, Freddy?

FREDDY

I know, but that's not what--

SHILOH

--I'm not trying to be insensitive, but this has gone on for far too long. Rent is due next week and you've let these auditions cost you another job.

FREDDY

I can't just give up, Shiloh.

SHILOH

I'm not asking you to give up. I want you to take some responsibility for the rest of your life. I want you to get your damn act together.

FREDDY

That's what I'm trying to do.

SHILOH

All I see you do is rehearse for auditions that you never manage to land. You're floundering, Freddy, and something needs to change.

FREDDY

That's your opinion. Not mine.

Freddy storms back towards her room.

SHILOH

You used to listen to my opinions.

FREDDY

That was before you became an ass.

Freddy slams her bedroom door behind her.

INT. THE COMPANY - SEAMUS' OFFICE - DAY

Seamus leans back in his chair as he calmly listens to an aggravated Celeste.

CELESTE

You invited her to audition? Do you have any idea the kind of damage this could do to The Company?

SEAMUS

Actually, I believe that this will solve all of the Board's problems.

CELESTE

Freddy was always a wild card. What makes you think this won't just remind her why she should sue us?

SEAMUS

She didn't sue a year ago, and she certainly won't sue now.

CELESTE

And the Board was okay with you taking that chance? They were okay with you jeopardizing all of our jobs?

SEAMUS

The Board knows what they need to know.

CELESTE

You should have left her alone.

SEAMUS

You don't know her like I do. She will come back. And when she does, any suspicion surrounding The Company goes away.

CELESTE

You're putting a lot of faith in a girl that despises you.

SEAMUS

Like it or not she needs me. And so do you.

Celeste pulls back at the veiled threat.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

You'll make sure she shows up at auditions. The rest I can handle.

Celeste seethes, but leaves without another word.

INT. SHILOH'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Freddy stretches and looks at her phone.

She watches the viral video on mute. Several million views.

She scrolls down quickly before she can see her fall, but she lingers on the comments. The most recent ones only a few hours old.

ON FREDDY'S PHONE

"Wow. What a train wreck."

"I shouldn't find this as funny as I do, but damn I just can't stop laughing. Lol!"

"She's a lovely dancer, too bad she couldn't hack it."

FREDDY

Stares at the phone emotionless with the comments reflected in her eyes.

Freddy shakes herself out of it and puts her phone away.

She stands up to face the mirror and tests her pointe shoes.

She eases into her part of the Don Quixote pas de deux. She performs it well, but it clearly works better as a duet.

Freddy stops in frustration and stares at her haunted reflection in the mirror.

Carefully she places one hand on her hip and then the other as she imitates where her partner's hands would go.

She goes up on pointe and tries to move through where her partner's hands would be as she goes through all the steps.

Freddy lifts one arm above her head and holds the other out to her side as she prepares for a finger turn.

She throws herself into the turn, but falls out of it.

Freddy runs her hands over her face in frustration.

EXT. THE COMPANY'S HOUSING - NIGHT

Freddy cautiously walks through the run-down complex.

She spots a gaggle of DANCERS ahead and ducks behind a wall until they pass.

Freddy continues to the next building over and climbs a flight of stairs.

Anxiously she stops on a second floor balcony and KNOCKS on one of the doors.

CLAIRE WICKS, 22, Puerto Rican, all technical perfection and no charm, opens the door and both girls fight to hide their surprise.

CLAIRE
What the hell do you want?

FREDDY
I need to speak with Kyle. Is he home?

CLAIRE
Even if he was I wouldn't tell you.

Claire goes to shut the door, but Freddy stops her.

FREDDY
Claire, please, this is important.
I need his help--

CLAIRE
--You're the last fucking person he would want to help after what you did to his career.

FREDDY
What do you mean? I didn't do anything to him.

CLAIRE
Except nearly ruin him with that little break down of yours? Yeah, he was in that video, too. Real classy of you to show up now though.

FREDDY
But Kyle didn't do anything--

CLAIRE
--I fucking know, but The Company is still fighting tooth and nail to clear him of any wrong doing.

FREDDY
I didn't know--

CLAIRE
--Save it, Freddy. No one cares
what you know anymore.

Claire slams the door in Freddy's face.

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - BUS STOP - NIGHT

Freddy walks up to a bus stop and checks the schedule. She sees that the next bus won't be there for an hour.

She takes a seat on the bench and pulls out her phone. Several unread text message notifications glare up at her.

Freddy opens the messages tab.

She hovers her thumb over Shiloh's name and the multiple messages he's left, but Wilder's name sits just below Shiloh's with a single unread message.

She opens Wilder's message.

WILDER (TEXT)
*Don't tell me you're just going to
leave without saying goodbye???*

Freddy shuts her messages and puts her phone away. She idly looks around as she waits.

After a beat, she double checks the bus schedule.

Still plenty of time.

She heads off down the block.

INT. HALF-BREWED COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Freddy enters the mostly empty coffee shop. She hesitates as she looks at the few CUSTOMERS.

She spots Wilder by the register as he occupies himself with drawing on a sketch pad. He scowls at the image and erases something.

Freddy quietly moves up in front of the register and leans over to get a better view of his artwork.

FREDDY
I didn't know you could draw.

Wilder jumps and quickly shuts the sketch pad.

WILDER

I don't. Not well. I'm in a class.

FREDDY

Sorry, I didn't mean to startle you.

WILDER

Do you always move that quietly?

FREDDY

Silence is more graceful.

WILDER

For sure. But, and I only mention this to help you, it's also very creepy.

FREDDY

I'll be sure to keep that in mind.

Wilder pulls back and gives Freddy a devilish smile.

WILDER

All that time spent playing coy, and look who couldn't last a day without seeing me?

FREDDY

(deadpan)

I'm here for the coffee.

WILDER

(deflates)

Oh, yeah, what can I get you?

FREDDY

I'm joking.

WILDER

Of course. I knew that. I was just playing along and--

FREDDY

--You totally fell for it.

WILDER

You're much crueler than you look, Freddy Sparks.

FREDDY

I prefer to think of it as being full of surprises.

WILDER

Does this mean you'll continue to surprise me? Or did you just come here to say goodbye?

FREDDY

Honestly, I'm not really sure why I came here. I guess I just know I can usually count on you to be a good distraction.

WILDER

Something on your mind? You know I'm actually a great listener.

FREDDY

It's boring ballet stuff. You wouldn't want to hear it.

WILDER

How about I make you that coffee, and you can tell me all about it?

Wilder moves to make the coffee, and Freddy moves down the counter with him.

He looks up at her expectantly over the espresso machine.

WILDER (CONT'D)

Whenever you're ready.

FREDDY

Pushy aren't you? Fine, I recently got this amazing opportunity to audition at a pretty prestigious ballet company. But I don't think I can go through with it.

Wilder turns away as a cloud of steam rises in front of him.

WILDER

Can I ask why?

FREDDY

I guess I'm scared. God, that sounds so pathetic.

WILDER

It's how you feel. It's not pathetic.

FREDDY
So you think it's a good reason to
stay away?

WILDER
I didn't say that.

He pours the steamed milk into her coffee.

WILDER (CONT'D)
Freddy, the one thing I know about
you is that you love ballet. You
shouldn't let anything hold you
back from it.

FREDDY
It's not that simple.

Wilder hands her the coffee.

WILDER
It's not supposed to be.

FREDDY
What do I owe you?

WILDER
The coffee is on the house, but the
advice is going to cost you.

FREDDY
(uneasy)
I don't have that much money on me.

WILDER
I'm joking. My advice is priceless.

FREDDY
(playful)
Okay, you know what maybe this is
goodbye after all.

Freddy grabs her coffee and heads towards the door.

WILDER
If you can't take it then you
shouldn't dish it out.

FREDDY
Bye, Wilder.

WILDER
See you around, Freddy Sparks.

She fights a grin as she steps out of the coffee shop.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Freddy smiles lost in thought as she sips her coffee and walks towards her apartment building.

CELESTE (O.S.)

Freddy--

Freddy jumps, but her fear quickly turns to anger when she spots Celeste by the building.

FREDDY

Go away.

CELESTE

I know I'm not exactly a friendly face right now.

Freddy pushes past Celeste and heads inside, but Celeste quickly follows after her.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Freddy climbs a flight of stairs.

CELESTE

Look, on the record I'm here to make sure you show up at the auditions.

Celeste's limp worsens as she follows Freddy up the stairs.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

But off the record I'm here to make sure that you don't.

FREDDY

What is this? Reverse psychology?

Freddy gets to her landing and searches for her keys.

CELESTE

Seamus is vying to be made artistic director. The Board has their reservations, but he's using his ability to get you back as a means of doing away with anyone who suspects foul play at The Company.

FREDDY
I'm not going back.

Freddy pulls out her keys and unlocks her door.

CELESTE
Good. He'll win the Board if you
show up.

Freddy pauses.

CELESTE (CONT'D)
Look, I knew you wouldn't go, but I
needed to make sure that you knew
it was the right choice.

FREDDY
And you're sure that he needs me to
get this job? He can't weasel his
way into it some other way?

CELESTE
Positive.

After a moment, Freddy walks into her apartment and shuts the
door behind her.

Celeste relaxes slightly and massages her sore leg.

INT. THE COMPANY - HALLWAY - DAY

Freddy walks past a bunch of DANCERS as they stretch, fix
their hair, and prepare their feet and pointe shoes.

Most pay her no mind and stay focused on their own business,
but several stare at her in shock as she passes.

At the end of the hall Celeste sits at a table and signs
Dancers in. Freddy joins the line.

CELESTE
Name, please?

FREDDY
Freddy Sparks.

Freddy looks at the list and points to her name.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
It's just there.

She grabs a number and a safety pin from the stack on the
table and walks away.

Celeste's face falls, but she continues to sign Dancers in.

BEA, 50s, the ballet mistress, comes into the hall.

BEA

Everyone with a number please join
us in the studio and find a place
at the barre.

Freddy walks into the studio with the other dancers.

INT. THE COMPANY - MAIN STUDIO - DAY

Celeste, Kira, and several other Board Members sit at the front of the room. The Board Members shift nervously at the sight of Freddy.

Freddy takes her place at the front of the barre.

Celeste watches Freddy with concern as the other Dancers shoot Freddy looks and whisper to one another.

Bea claps her hands as she steps to the front of the room, and everyone turns their attention to her.

BEA

Everyone warm? Let's start with a
nice simple fondu, shall we?

Bea quickly demonstrates the steps, and Freddy marks along with her.

INT. THE COMPANY - MAIN STUDIO - DAY

Freddy stands off to the side of the studio with several other Dancers as they watch a small group perform a combination in the center.

Freddy marks the steps as they go with intent focus.

AISLING GREEN, 18, white, smiley, innocent, stands beside Freddy, shaky and nervous.

FREDDY

First Company audition?

AISLING

Is it that obvious?

BEA (O.S.)

Next group please.

Another group of Dancers takes to the floor, and Freddy and Aisling move up.

FREDDY
You'll get better at hiding your nerves in time. Trust me, every girl in here is a panicked mess.

AISLING
Even you?

FREDDY
I'm absolutely terrified.

BEA (O.S.)
Last group please.

The girls move into the center and perform the combination.

Freddy pirouettes into...

INT. THE COMPANY - MAIN STUDIO - DAY

...an arabesque with her right leg extended perfectly behind her at an impressive height. She never wavers in control.

Now completely alone on the floor, Freddy performs her solo for the Board Members, Bea, and Celeste.

Their polite applause follows her finish.

CELESTE
Thank you, Freddy. That was lovely.

Freddy curtseys and smiles at the Board Members.

FREDDY
Thank you. Always a pleasure.

CELESTE
Freddy, before you go, Seamus would like to speak with you in his office.

Freddy freezes, but hides her fear.

FREDDY
Of course.

Freddy grabs her bag and heads for the door.

KIRA
Freddy, just a moment.

She waits as Kira comes over to her.

KIRA (CONT'D)

I want you to know that the Board thinks very highly of you. We would be completely honored to have you back in The Company.

FREDDY

Thank you. That's great to hear.

KIRA

And if you ever need anything, anything at all, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Kira hands Freddy a business card.

FREDDY

I promise I won't.

Freddy slips the card into her bag and leaves the studio.

INT. THE COMPANY - HALLWAY - DAY

Freddy stops in front of Seamus' office. She steels herself.

SEAMUS (O.S.)

Now was that really so difficult?

Freddy spins around to see Seamus behind her.

She takes an involuntary step back and hits the door.

Seamus keeps his distance.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

The pressure wasn't too much for you today, was it?

FREDDY

I can handle the pressure.

SEAMUS

I'm glad to hear it. You've done some maturing with your time off.

FREDDY

My time off?

SEAMUS

There's nothing to be ashamed of, Freddy.

(MORE)

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

Last year you just weren't ready for everything this job required of you. But I always had a feeling you would be interested in coming back.

Seamus takes a step towards her. She goes rigid against the door, and he stops.

FREDDY

This won't be like last time.

SEAMUS

Like last time? I have no idea what you're talking about. I'm just trying to get into my office.

He gestures at the door behind her.

FREDDY

You can't pretend like nothing happened.

SEAMUS

I can. And it would be best if you did too.

Freddy steps away from the door. She makes sure to keep Seamus in front of her and open air at her back.

He moves towards the door completely at ease.

FREDDY

Don't pretend like this is for my benefit. I know that you need me to make director.

Seamus falters for a moment, but Freddy takes it.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

And I might be able to help you with that.

SEAMUS

Might?

FREDDY

I have some conditions I want met.

SEAMUS

Go on. Entertain me.

FREDDY

All interactions we have need to stay completely professional, and once the Board makes you director you will make me a principal.

SEAMUS

Is that all?

He takes a step towards her, and Freddy scrambles several steps back. Seamus looks her over intently as her brief flare of confidence disappears.

Freddy stands frozen as Seamus extends his hand.

It hangs between them for several tense moments, but she can only stare at it.

Seamus pulls his hand back with a grin.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

Welcome back to The Company.

INT. HALF-BREWED COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Freddy, dance bag in tow, joins the long line of CUSTOMERS.

She spots David at the register and ducks out of his eye-line. Finally she sees Wilder at the end of the busy counter.

Anxiously she checks the time as the line inches forward.

Freddy turns to leave.

WILDER (O.S.)

For Freddy!

Wilder waits at the end of the counter with a coffee in hand.

Freddy hesitates as she glances around at the other Customers and then quickly heads towards Wilder.

David glares at them both, but stays at the register.

Freddy takes the coffee.

FREDDY

Pretty bold of you to keep assuming what I want to order.

WILDER

Pretty bold of you to try and leave without saying hi.

FREDDY
Sorry, I just don't have as much
time as I thought.

Wilder eyes her dance bag and spots the ribbons of her pointe shoes dangling over the side.

WILDER
Important audition?

FREDDY
First day back at The Company.

WILDER
So you auditioned! That's amazing,
Freddy. I'm so proud of you.

FREDDY
You made a pretty convincing
argument. How could I not?

DAVID (O.S.)
Wilder! Back to work!

Freddy glances at an irate David still stuck at the register.

FREDDY
I should get going. I don't want to
be late.

She fishes cash out of her pocket and hands it over to Wilder, but he refuses it.

WILDER
It's on me.

FREDDY
I can't let you keep doing that.

WILDER
Don't worry, I'll let you buy me
dinner tonight to make up for it.

FREDDY
I'll have rehearsals until late.

WILDER
You have to eat sometime.

Freddy rolls her eyes as she heads towards the exit.

FREDDY
You are relentless.

Wilder shouts across the coffee shop after her.

WILDER

I prefer the term dedicated!

Freddy shakes her head in amusement as she leaves.

INT. THE COMPANY - MAIN STUDIO - DAY

Freddy sits alone in the studio as she prepares her feet for her pointe shoes.

The studio doors open and DANCERS chat amongst themselves as they populate the barres in the center.

Freddy focuses intently on her feet as she tries to ignore the blatant stares and glowering looks that come her way.

Kyle enters and takes his place at the front of a barre.

Freddy puts on her pointe shoes hastily and makes her way towards Kyle.

At the last second Claire slides into the place across from Kyle with a withering glare at Freddy.

CLAIRE

Corps members take the back.

FREDDY

I'm not--

Freddy sees the look of hatred on Kyle's face and stops.

She quickly moves to the back of the room and finds an open space beside Aisling who gives her a welcoming grin.

Freddy returns it halfheartedly.

INT. THE COMPANY - HALLWAY - DAY

Kyle and Claire walk out of the studio and head for the exit.

Freddy leaves the studio with Aisling.

AISLING

Do you think you can help me with my fouettés?

FREDDY

Um, maybe. I need to see--

CELESTE (O.S.)
Freddy. Kyle.

Kyle and Freddy turn to see Celeste at the end of the hall.

CELESTE (CONT'D)
Follow me please.

Freddy looks at Kyle, uncertain, but he pushes past her.

INT. THE COMPANY - SEAMUS' OFFICE - DAY

Seamus sits calmly behind his desk with a shell-shocked Freddy and Kyle across from him.

KYLE
Absolutely not.

FREDDY
I won't do it.

SEAMUS
You two don't have an option. You start private rehearsals in the morning.

KYLE
Claire is my partner now. We work much better together than Freddy and I ever did.

Freddy takes that hard.

FREDDY
He obviously doesn't want to dance with me. Pick someone else.

SEAMUS
Kyle, you would do well to consider that changing your pas de deux partner is a test to judge whether or not you're ready for a promotion. At the moment I am underwhelmed by your lack of professionalism. If you have any interest at all in having your contract renewed then I expect to see you in the morning.

Kyle gives a curt nod and walks out.

FREDDY

Find anyone else. He hates me. I can't dance with him.

SEAMUS

I don't care. You will learn to work with him if you want to make principal.

FREDDY

Is this supposed to convince the Board that you should be director?

SEAMUS

It would rehab both of your images if you partner again. If I can take the credit for making it happen, then even better.

Freddy, completely stuck, stalks out in annoyance.

EXT. THE COMPANY - DAY

Freddy rushes to catch up to Kyle and Claire.

FREDDY

Kyle! Wait! Please, I just want to talk to you for a minute.

Claire tries to keep going, but Kyle turns back grudgingly.

KYLE

You have one minute.

FREDDY

We obviously can't get out of doing this. I think we should practice on our own before we meet with Seamus tomorrow.

KYLE

And why would we do that?

FREDDY

The quicker we learn to trust one another--

KYLE

--That's not something that can happen overnight. Maybe not ever.

FREDDY

I get that you're pissed at me, but
this is just as hard for me as it
is for you.

Kyle heads back to an impatient Claire.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

I have the studio at nine tonight.

Kyle and Claire walk away.

INT. THE COMPANY - SMALL STUDIO - NIGHT

Freddy runs through combinations at the barre as she watches
the clock. It's well past nine.

She pushes away from the barre in frustration and grabs her
phone. She cues up contemporary music and takes her place in
the middle of the studio.

Freddy improvises and completely lets go as she gets lost in
the music.

Her movements are sharp and angry.

She throws herself into each step with a certain suffocating
energy and desperateness.

Freddy lets the power of all of it consume her.

She finishes with the music, and stares at her exhausted and
sweaty reflection.

After a beat, Freddy gets up and goes to the barre.

Freddy goes back on pointe and monitors her form in the
mirror as she resumes her combinations.

INT. FREDDY/SHILOH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Freddy sneaks into the apartment quietly and heads towards
her room.

Shiloh turns on a light in the kitchen and startles Freddy.

FREDDY

What the hell are you doing just
sitting in the dark?

SHILOH

I was trying not to wake you up.

She notices that an open carton of ice cream sits in front of him. The spoon half way to his mouth.

FREDDY

Stress eating again?

SHILOH

Fighting with you is taking years
off of my life.

Freddy holds out her hand for the ice cream, and Shiloh hands it over. She takes a spoonful.

FREDDY

You even splurged on name brand?
Must be some pretty serious guilt.

She gives the ice cream back, and he eyes her dance bag.

SHILOH

Were you rehearsing for another
audition?

Shiloh sticks the ice cream back in the freezer.

FREDDY

Sometimes I dance just to dance.
There doesn't always have to be a
reason for it.

SHILOH

Did you find somewhere else to
dance then? I checked in at the
studio and I know you haven't been
there today.

FREDDY

Are you stalking me now?
(fake hurt)
Where is the trust?

Freddy heads towards her room, and Shiloh follows.

SHILOH

I trust you. But I want to make
sure that you're okay. I can't do
that if you don't tell me what's
going on.

She throws her bag into her room and leans against the door frame as she faces him.

FREDDY
If you must know, I got a job.

SHILOH
(disappointment)
Oh, really?

FREDDY
Yes, really. Why is that so
upsetting?

SHILOH
It's not! But I was kind of hoping
that you had been out with that
cute barista you always talk about.

FREDDY
I do not always talk about him.

SHILOH
It's embarrassing how much I know
about Wilder Evans. For my sake
alone, text him.

FREDDY
For your information, I already
have.

Freddy stifles a laugh at Shiloh's shock and disappears into
her bedroom.

Shiloh tries to follow her.

SHILOH
You can't drop a bomb like that and
leave me without details.

Freddy blocks him from coming in and pulls the door mostly
closed.

FREDDY
You've lost privileges to details.

SHILOH
I promise I'll never make fun of
your crush again.

FREDDY
Good night, Shiloh.

She pushes the door shut despite his protests.

INT. THE COMPANY - SMALL STUDIO - DAY

Freddy sews ribbons onto her pointe shoes as Kyle joins her in the studio to stretch.

Tense silence hangs between them as they both focus on their own tasks.

Seamus enters with several of the Board Members all in business attire, and a couple patrons in more casual, but still fine clothes, JOHNSON, 69, roaming eyes, and THOMAS, 55, real charmer.

While the Board Members look uneasy at the sight of Freddy and Kyle, Thomas and Johnson watch Freddy with a piqued interest.

SEAMUS

I hope you two are warm.

FREDDY

(whispers)

What are they doing here? I thought this was a private rehearsal?

Seamus beckons Freddy over to the side of the room.

SEAMUS

The whole point of this is to prove that there is no bad blood between the two of you. Yesterday you made it apparent that wasn't going to be possible, so I brought in an audience to motivate you to act like it is. You forced my hand here, Freddy.

He walks back towards Kyle.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

To the center please.

She grudgingly joins him and Kyle in the center.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

Do you both remember your gala piece from last year?

Both Freddy and Kyle stiffen.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

Why don't we start with that? Run it through and we can see what areas need work.

Freddy and Kyle take their places on opposite sides of the room as the SAME MUSIC from the video plays.

Freddy dances her solo part first, perfectly, as if she has every single beat committed to memory.

Kyle joins her, and as soon as he touches her the music gets LOUDER.

He picks her up for the lift, and she pitches forward as her mind FLASHES:

Seamus' hands massage her shoulders and slide down her arms to rest possessively on her hips. She tries to move, but they hold her in place.

Kyle's hands close around her waist to keep her from falling.

BACK in the moment Kyle drops her.

Seamus stops the music. Freddy quickly gets back up and tries to cover it up.

FREDDY

Sorry. That was my fault.

SEAMUS

Nonsense. This is a partnership,
and you both made mistakes. Kyle
allow me to step in.

Kyle moves aside, and Seamus takes his place behind Freddy.

Freddy struggles to even her breathing.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

We'll take it from the lift.

He cues Kyle to restart the music. It ROARS in Freddy's ears.

She steels herself as Seamus puts his hands on her waist.

His hands remain professional and stay exactly where they should be.

Seamus lifts her into the air and everything goes SILENT.

Freddy performs the steps as Seamus' hands lead her from one step to the next. Unable to do anything else she lets him control her.

Johnson and Thomas watch with rapt attention.

The Board Members look impressed.

Freddy meets Kyle's gaze, and he looks at her blank expression with growing concern.

INT. THE COMPANY - CHANGING ROOMS - SHOWER - DAY

Steam billows around a panicking Freddy as she scrubs at her body furiously in a stream of scorching hot water.

It's not enough.

Her face crumples as she slides down the shower wall and digs her nails into her shoulders. Blood runs down her arms.

INT. THE COMPANY - MAIN STUDIO - DAY

Freddy comes into class late with red eyes and her wet hair in a bun. A sweater covers her injured shoulders.

She avoids Bea's look of disapproval as she finds a place across from Claire and Aisling at the barre.

Freddy quickly slips into rhythm with the others.

CLAIRE

Your private better have gone well this morning. For Kyle's sake.

Freddy takes a deep breath, but focuses on technique.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Wouldn't want you messing things up for him again with casting coming up so soon. He would make a great Prince Charming to my Aurora.

AISLING

Is it confirmed then? We're really doing Sleeping Beauty?

CLAIRE

Practically is at this point. Don't worry, Aisling, you'll make a great 'guest at the party'.

BEA

And you would be lucky to make 'Lilac Fairy', Claire. Enough chatting. Up on pointe ladies.

Everyone rises up and takes their hand off the barre as they balance. They hold to see who can last the longest.

Claire wobbles and falls off pointe.

Freddy a beat behind her.

Aisling rests perfectly composed on pointe as she stares straight ahead with her focus unbroken.

Claire seethes, but Freddy barely notices.

INT. THE COMPANY - MAIN STUDIO - DAY

The rest of the girls leave the studio, but Freddy sits in the corner and tends to her bleeding feet.

Freddy looks up when Kyle enters.

FREDDY

Don't tell me that you want to practice now?

KYLE

I wanted to make sure you were okay. You left so quickly after the private this morning I didn't have a chance to talk to you.

FREDDY

I had something to take care of before class.

KYLE

Freddy, what happened this morning?

FREDDY

What are you talking about? Everything went fine.

She digs through her bag.

Kyle sits down across from her.

KYLE

You didn't look fine to me--

FREDDY

--I don't want to talk about this.

She pulls bandages out of her bag and bandages her feet.

KYLE

You wanted to work on trusting each other again. If there's something I did or--

FREDDY

--Stop.

KYLE

Freddy, you need to tell me what happened. If I hurt you or--

FREDDY

--You didn't do anything.

Freddy quickly shoves everything in her bag and storms out.

Kyle watches her uncertain.

INT. FREDDY/SHILOH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Freddy enters the apartment, but freezes when she sees the livid look on Shiloh's face.

SHILOH

You actually went back? Are you crazy? The Company, Freddy?

FREDDY

How did you--

SHILOH

--Kyle called me. Said he was worried about you, and that something weird happened in your private with Seamus?

FREDDY

Can we not talk about this right now?

She heads for her room, but he steps in her way.

Freddy stops in her tracks.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

Please move.

SHILOH

Why didn't you tell me?

FREDDY

You would have stopped me.

SHILOH

For good reason.

FREDDY

Just trust that I know what I'm doing. I wouldn't have gone back otherwise.

SHILOH

Maybe I would trust you if you weren't always making the same mistakes.

FREDDY

I'm rebuilding my career--

SHILOH

--If that were true you wouldn't have even considered going back!

FREDDY

It's not like I have that many options!

SHILOH

The studio has always been an option and you know that. You don't need to be in a company to be passionate about dancing.

FREDDY

I know that's what you think, but it's different for me.

SHILOH

Why? What makes you so special?

FREDDY

You don't want to be a principal anymore. You gave that up to teach, and I am so glad that you found what you love to do, but--

SHILOH

(quiet; resigned)

--That kind of life isn't good enough for you.

FREDDY

It's not a matter of being good enough or not. It's not enough period. I want so much more than this. Why shouldn't I do whatever it takes to get it?

SHILOH

None of this is worth losing
yourself over.

FREDDY

Is that what you tell yourself?
That you quit The Company because
you were losing yourself? Shiloh,
you quit because you were scared,
and you keep trying to act like
it's the same for me.

Shiloh grabs her arm, and Freddy tenses.

SHILOH

So you aren't scared?

Freddy pulls away from him and goes into her room.

Shiloh follows her, immediately apologetic.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. That was a shitty thing--

He pauses when he sees Freddy hurriedly throwing clothes into
a duffel bag.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

--What are you doing?

FREDDY

Leaving.

SHILOH

Freddy, don't do that. Stay. We can
talk this over in the morning.

Freddy grabs the duffel bag.

FREDDY

I'm done talking about it. You
chose to be done, Shiloh. I never
got a choice.

She pushes past Shiloh, and he flinches as the apartment door
slams behind her.

EXT. HALF-BREWED COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Freddy walks towards the closed coffee shop and watches
Wilder clean up through the windows.

She goes to knock on the door, but hesitates.

Freddy walks away.

WILDER (O.S.)

Freddy?

She turns to see Wilder in the door way.

WILDER (CONT'D)

You really craving coffee this late, or did you just miss me that much?

FREDDY

(wavers)

Can I ask you for a huge favor?

Wilder's grin disappears, suddenly serious.

WILDER

Of course, what do you need?

Freddy takes a deep breath.

INT. WILDER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Freddy sits awkwardly on the couch in Wilder's small apartment as he grabs pillows and blankets from the bedroom.

FREDDY

This was a stupid idea. I should go.

She stands and grabs her bag.

WILDER

It's a bit unorthodox for a first date I'll admit, but you don't seem like the kind of girl that does anything by the rules.

Freddy moves towards the door.

WILDER (CONT'D)

Please stay. At least for tonight. The bedroom is all yours, and I'll take the couch.

Freddy looks towards the bedroom, unsure. She sits back down.

FREDDY

(rushed)

I can't pay you right now, but I will as soon as--

WILDER

--Hey, hey, hey, you don't have to pay me. You needed a place to crash, and I happened to have one. There's nothing more to it.

FREDDY

But you only agreed to let me stay because you like me. Because you...want something out of it.

Wilder takes that in and looks down at the ground, suddenly awkward at the accusation.

WILDER

Yeah, I do like you, but that's not why I said yes. I'm not expecting anything from this, Freddy. All joking aside, I don't even expect a date if that's not something that you want.

Freddy hastily tries to wipe tears off her cheeks.

FREDDY

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to accuse you of anything.

Wilder sits down on the opposite side of the couch.

WILDER

No harm done.
(re her tears)
Long day?

Freddy nods, embarrassed.

WILDER (CONT'D)

Well, I can't let you cry all by yourself.

Wilder goes over to a bookshelf full of DVDs and scans them. Freddy watches in confusion as he plucks one off the shelf.

He pops it in the blu-ray player and turns on the TV.

FREDDY

What are you doing?

WILDER

Putting on a movie.

FREDDY

But--

WILDER

--Don't worry, it's a real
tearjerker. It gets me every time.

He settles into his side of the couch as the menu screen pops up. Freddy laughs through her tears.

FREDDY

The Devil Wears Prada is a
tearjerker?

WILDER

You just wait, I'll be sobbing by
the end.

FREDDY

You will not.

WILDER

It's one of my most guarded
secrets. You can't tell a soul.

Wilder waits for her response, suddenly serious.

FREDDY

Your secret is safe with me.

He nods, satisfied, and starts the movie. Freddy shakes her head in amusement.

INT. THE COMPANY - HALLWAY - DAY

Freddy stops in confusion when she spots a huddle of Dancers at the end of the hall.

Aisling spots Freddy and breaks away from the group to come meet her.

FREDDY

What's going on?

AISLING

They officially announced the
season. We're actually doing
Sleeping Beauty!

Aisling takes Freddy's hand and pulls her down the hall towards the crowd.

Freddy resists, but Aisling doesn't notice.

Celeste braves the crowd of Dancers.

CELESTE

Okay that's enough. Everyone calm
down and listen up.

Slowly the Dancers part for Celeste and form a semicircle
around her.

Kyle catches Freddy's attention from the other end of the
group, but Freddy ignores him and focuses on Celeste.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

Now that you've all had plenty of
time to gush about the season we
can finally discuss casting.

Murmurs of excitement spread throughout the crowd.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

Over the next few days myself,
Seamus, and the generous patrons
that made these ballets possible
will be popping into your
rehearsals to finalize the casting
choices.

Celeste looks around at the Dancers.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

As you may have noticed we have
added quite a bit to our season
this year. Which leaves us quite
thin on principal dancers if we
hope to have up to a third cast on
every ballet. With that in mind I
caution you all to bring your best
work forward in your classes.

Celeste nods to Bea who claps her hands loudly to command
everyone's attention.

BEA

You heard her. Get in the studio
and get to work.

The Dancers scatter into the studio.

Freddy walks up to the now vacated notice board and reads
over the season announcement.

CELESTE

I heard about the private.

FREDDY

What about it? It went perfectly fine.

CELESTE

It must have. Thomas specifically asked for you to be considered for his ballet.

FREDDY

He wants me as a soloist?

CELESTE

A principal.

FREDDY

Which ballet?

CELESTE

The Red Shoes. It's between you and Claire. Seamus is telling her as we speak.

FREDDY

But we're both soloists. Thomas didn't want an established principal?

CELESTE

He's new blood. I think he wants to make a splash by breaking tradition.

Freddy processes this.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

I know how badly you want this Freddy, but I think you should back out. You're only just getting back into dancing professionally. I don't want you to push yourself too far too fast.

FREDDY

Does Seamus know your telling me this?

CELESTE

Forget about Seamus. Whether you dance this season or not he'll still be able to convince the Board to give him The Company now that you're back.

FREDDY
 Maybe he can, but I have something
 I need to prove, too.

Freddy stalks off towards the studio.

INT. THE COMPANY - MAIN STUDIO - DAY

Freddy stands against the wall as she watches a COUPLE
 perform their pas de deux.

Celeste, Seamus, and Thomas take notes on the performances.

Kyle shifts through the Dancers until he stops beside Freddy.

She stiffens.

KYLE
 I tried calling you.

FREDDY
 I saw.

KYLE
 I didn't know you hadn't told
 Shiloh--

FREDDY
 --Of course I didn't tell him,
 Kyle. He hates The Company. He
 hated you when you wouldn't leave.

She focuses back on the Couple in the center.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
 And now he hates me.

KYLE
 Freddy, I--

FREDDY
 --Save it.

The Couple finishes their dance and they move to the side.

BEA
 Next.

Freddy comes into the center, and Kyle follows.

Freddy's anger and distrust towards Kyle makes her dancing
 aggressive, and he fights to match her for speed and
 intensity.

She rips herself away from his touch as soon as possible and cheats the movements by doing it all on her own without his additional support.

The dance ends well before the music, and she pulls away from Kyle. Seamus looks at her with barely contained annoyance.

SEAMUS

Can we see Kyle and Claire please?

Claire flashes a smile as she takes her place next to Kyle.

Freddy watches grudgingly as they dance perfectly together.

INT. WILDER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Freddy sits in the splits and watches a video of herself and Kyle from various rehearsals.

Wilder sits on the couch and looks between Freddy and the TV as she obsessively rewinds the video.

As Freddy moves her hands in time with the steps her sweater slips off her shoulder.

Wilder notices the fresh nail marks with a frown.

WILDER

What exactly are you looking for?

Freddy focuses on her own reaction when Kyle places his hands on her waist.

FREDDY

Flaws. Things to fix.

WILDER

Have you found any?

FREDDY

Plenty.

WILDER

Then how are you going to fix them?

Freddy looks at him in confusion.

WILDER (CONT'D)

You've been watching that video for over an hour. I don't really see how it's doing any good to know your mistakes if you don't do anything about them.

She moves out of her splits to face him.

FREDDY

I don't know what else to do. It's not like I have that much time.

WILDER

Try getting out of your own head.

FREDDY

When I need to do that I usually dance. It's not exactly helpful when dance is the problem.

WILDER

Don't you have any interests outside of ballet?

FREDDY

Of course. Contemporary.

WILDER

I'm being serious.

FREDDY

So am I. The only people who make it in ballet are the ones who give it everything.

WILDER

You weren't born dancing. There has to be something that pre-ballet Freddy liked to do.

FREDDY

I started dancing at two. I don't remember pre-ballet Freddy.

WILDER

I think it's time you tried something new.

FREDDY

Like what?

Wilder thinks for a moment and gives Freddy a grin.

EXT. WASHINGTON HARBOUR - ICE RINK - NIGHT

Freddy beautifully skates around the rink.

She performs a jump and lands in an arabesque as she glides past TOURISTS on one leg.

Wilder sits in the middle of the ice rink in resignation.

Freddy sprays Wilder with ice from her skates as she slides to a stop in front of him.

FREDDY
Why would you take me ice skating
if you can't skate?

WILDER
I admit I didn't expect it to be
this difficult.

He struggles to get up, but the skates slide out from under him, and he falls back down.

WILDER (CONT'D)
Please tell me, what am I doing
wrong?

FREDDY
You need to use your toepick.

She demonstrates and digs her toepick into the ice.

Wilder follows her instructions and manages to stand, but his face betrays his fear as he wobbles.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
Don't lean too far forward.

WILDER
(resigned)
I'm going to fall.

Freddy grabs his hands and helps him balance.

FREDDY
Yes, you will. You're going to fall
a lot. That's how you learn what
not to do. It's inevitable.

Wilder wobbles and almost pulls Freddy down with him.

WILDER
I don't think I can do this.

FREDDY
Of course you can.

They stand face to face for a moment, completely steady.

Freddy notices their hands, and, after a beat, she smiles.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
Maybe we both can.

Wilder barely notices her words when she lets go of one of his hands.

WILDER
(slight panic)
What are you doing?

FREDDY
You can't stand still forever.

Freddy hangs on to his other hand as she slowly leads him around the rink.

INT. THE COMPANY - SMALL STUDIO - DAY

Freddy practices a solo from The Red Shoes.

She pours everything into the steps and dances with abandon.

INT. THE COMPANY - HALLWAY - DAY

Claire watches Freddy dance through the window, her expression unreadable.

SEAMUS (O.S.)
Freddy's impeccable, isn't she?

Seamus moves to stand behind Claire.

CLAIRE
She's neglecting her technique.

SEAMUS
With The Red Shoes there is a delicate line to walk between technique and artistry. But when it comes down to it there is no doubt that you have always had the better turn out.

Claire watches Freddy hit all the emotional points of the story, her own face a hard mask.

CLAIRE
I have artistry, too.

SEAMUS
Not like that, you don't.

Seamus massages Claire's shoulders.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

It would be in your best interest
to focus on your strengths.

Claire tears her eyes away from Freddy.

CLAIRE

I will. Thank you.

Seamus massages Claire's shoulders a moment longer as he
watches Freddy, and then he takes off down the hall.

Claire waits for him to disappear around the corner before
she storms in the opposite direction.

She hastily grabs a pack of cigarettes from her bag and
plucks one from the carton with shaky hands.

Claire lights it as she walks, and practically runs into
Shiloh on her way out the door.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Get the fuck out of my way.

Shiloh raises his hands in surrender and moves aside as she
pushes past him.

INT. THE COMPANY - SMALL STUDIO - DAY

Freddy finishes her rehearsal and leans on the barre to catch
her breath.

She catches sight of Shiloh in the mirror and scowls.

FREDDY

What are you doing here?

Shiloh steps into the studio.

SHILOH

You won't answer my calls or my
texts. This is the only place I
knew you would show up to
eventually.

FREDDY

I told you I don't want to talk
about this anymore.

SHILOH

Fine. Then don't talk about it. But you can't shut me out like this. Where have you even been staying?

FREDDY

Don't worry. I have a place to go.

SHILOH

Come back to the apartment. It doesn't need to be like this.

FREDDY

And you'll support my decision to dance with The Company?

SHILOH

You can't ask me to do that. Not after everything they did.

FREDDY

I have enough people here telling me that I'm not good enough or that I should quit. I don't need to go home to that, too.

Freddy turns back to the mirror and looks at Shiloh's reflection.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

Can you go? I need to rehearse.

Shiloh stays put.

After a moment, Freddy cues up her music and starts the solo.

SHILOH

The Red Shoes is fitting for you.

Freddy falters slightly as she catches sight of him leaving in the mirror.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

(over his shoulder)

Best of luck.

The door shuts behind him, and Freddy does her best to dive back into the dance.

INT. THE COMPANY - MAIN STUDIO - DAY

Seamus, Celeste, and Thomas wait up in the front of the room.

Freddy and Claire stretch at the back of the studio. Claire stays oddly silent.

FREDDY

It's not like you to miss a chance
to trash talk.

CLAIRE

There's no need to mess with you if
I've obviously already won the
part.

FREDDY

What makes you so sure they won't
cast me?

CLAIRE

You can't even make it through a
class pas de deux performance
without embarrassing yourself.

FREDDY

They wouldn't have asked me to
audition if they weren't seriously
considering me for the role.

CLAIRE

Or Seamus is just trying to
motivate me to work harder by
pitting me against you.

FREDDY

I motivate you, huh?

CLAIRE

Seamus' insistence that we exist on
the same level is insulting more
than anything else, but I will
gladly take any chance to prove to
him just how wrong he is.

Freddy looks livid and Claire gives her a cutting grin.

SEAMUS

Ladies, shall we begin?

Freddy and Claire stand up.

FREDDY

(under her breath)

Don't forget that Seamus only knows
who you are because you were an
understudy that got lucky.

Claire turns to Freddy; shock evident on her face.

Freddy turns to Seamus, Celeste, and Thomas.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
I'll go first.

THOMAS
Lovely, whenever you're ready.

Freddy makes to move to the center, but Claire grabs her arm. Freddy tenses, but Claire holds on.

CLAIRE
(under her breath)
And you're only here because he needs to save face. Don't mistake that for him thinking you actually have any talent.

Claire lets go of Freddy.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
(smug)
Merde.

Freddy goes to the center, but with her focus thrown she messes up royally.

She stops halfway through the solo, and quickly gives her bow before retreating to the back of the studio.

Claire, all smiles, takes Freddy's place in the center and performs a technically perfect performance.

Seamus, Celeste, and Thomas confer amongst themselves for a few moments while Claire and Freddy cool down.

Thomas stands and draws their attention.

THOMAS
Ladies, thank you both so much for entertaining my rather unusual antics these past few days. But I have finally reached a decision. Freddy, you'll dance the part of Victoria, and Claire I would love for you to be her understudy.

Freddy looks at Thomas in confusion, and Claire's face falls.

CLAIRE
Understudy?

THOMAS

You both danced beautifully this week. You have to understand that it was a difficult choice.

Claire quickly grabs her things and runs out of the room.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

(laughs awkwardly)

Such a shame she couldn't have brought some of that emotion into the dance.

Freddy looks at Celeste who looks equally confused by Claire's reaction.

FREDDY

I should go make sure she's okay.

Freddy heads off after Claire.

INT. THE COMPANY - CHANGE ROOMS - DAY

Claire sits in a corner of the room and cries as she smokes a cigarette.

She hastily tries to wipe away tears as Freddy barges in.

CLAIRE

Get out!

Freddy freezes at the sight of Claire.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

You are the last fucking person I want to see right now.

FREDDY

Should I go find Kyle?

Claire shakes her head and points the cigarette at Freddy.

CLAIRE

You won't speak a word of this to anyone. I'm not the kind of girl that cries when she doesn't get her fucking way.

Freddy sits down across from Claire.

FREDDY

I know you aren't.

Claire cries harder and takes a drag.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
What is all of this about?

Claire gives a wry laugh.

CLAIRE
It's not fucking fair. I do everything that they ask and it still doesn't mean anything.

FREDDY
You were the better dancer today. Thomas should have chosen you.

CLAIRE
This isn't about who danced better. It never has been. It's always been about who the patrons want to fuck.

Claire takes another drag on her cigarette while Freddy takes that in.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
And I guess I've already served my purpose in that regard.

FREDDY
You slept with Thomas?

CLAIRE
Are you really that naive? This is how The Company has always worked. The dancers sleep with the patrons to get the roles.

FREDDY
Why has no one come forward about this?

CLAIRE
Why didn't you? Last year at the gala?

Freddy pulls back, and Claire watches her closely.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Not everyone can handle The Company's system. You honestly stuck with it longer than I thought you would.

FREDDY
I thought it was just me. I didn't
realize that it was--

CLAIRE
(pointed)
--All of us?

FREDDY
We can't let them do this to us.
This isn't how it's meant to work.

Claire sighs and wipes away her last few tears. She stands as she takes a final pull on her cigarette.

CLAIRE
There are no morals in ballet.

Freddy watches as Claire drops her cigarette on the floor and grinds it down with the toe of her pointe shoe.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Don't try to force yours into it.

Claire stalks out as Freddy looks on in devastation.

INT. THE COMPANY - MAIN STUDIO - DAY

Freddy walks into class in a daze. The other Dancers stretch and gossip across the studio.

Claire laughs with Kyle as he helps her stretch.

Aisling bounces up to Freddy.

AISLING
Did you see it?!

Freddy jumps and focuses in on Aisling.

FREDDY
Sorry?

AISLING
Did you see the casting notice?
They've announced the roles!

FREDDY
Oh, no, I didn't. Were you cast?

AISLING
I'm second cast Lilac Fairy!

FREDDY
Aisling, that's amazing.

AISLING
And congratulations on Victoria!
It's all anyone can talk about.

Freddy looks around the studio. Some Dancers sneak glances at her while others stare outright as if sizing her up.

Their HUSHED WHISPERS suddenly seem LOUD in Freddy's ears.

Everywhere she looks their judgement, resentment, and even some respect follow her.

Freddy pales and runs out of the studio.

INT. SHILOH'S STUDIO - DAY

Several STUDENTS help Shiloh move ballet barres to the side of the studio.

Freddy bursts in disheveled and on the brink of tears. She stops when she sees the students.

Shiloh takes one look at her.

SHILOH
Thanks for the help guys. Why don't
you go grab some water and meet me
back here in fifteen?

The Students gladly make their way past Freddy.

Shiloh moves towards her.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
What's going on? Are you okay?

FREDDY
(shaky)
Did you know?

SHILOH
What are you talking about? What
happened?

He reaches out to touch her, but Freddy jerks away.

FREDDY
Did. You. Know.

Shiloh pulls back as realization dawns on him. His guilt plays across his face.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
 Tell me that you didn't.
 (off his silence)
 Shiloh, tell me you didn't know!
 Tell me--

SHILOH
 --I can't tell you that, Freddy.

Freddy struggles through tears.

FREDDY
 Is that why you left? Because they forced you--

SHILOH
 --No. They never forced me to do anything. Everything was consensual and agreed upon beforehand. I knew exactly what I was signing up for.

FREDDY
 Why didn't you tell anyone? Why didn't you at least tell me?!

SHILOH
 I didn't know it would happen to you!

Freddy pulls back.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
 I was offered a chance to jump ahead and I took it. And I regret that every day. But I never imagined that it would happen to you, Freddy. If I had known that they were going to--

FREDDY
 --Rape me.

Shiloh freezes.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
 They gave you a choice, but they tried to trick me into mine. That night at the gala Seamus told me that I owed him for everything that he had done for me. That I would be a star because of him.
 (MORE)

FREDDY (CONT'D)

Didn't I want to thank him for giving me everything that I ever wanted? Wasn't this what I wanted more than anything else? Wasn't I grateful?

SHILOH

(quiet)

What did you say?

Freddy's tears turn to sobs.

FREDDY

I said no.

Shiloh opens his arms, unsure.

Freddy wraps him in a hug, and they both hold on tightly.

INT. FREDDY/SHILOH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Shiloh cooks in the kitchen while Freddy sits at the counter and fiddles with Kira's business card.

SHILOH

So you struck your own bargain with Seamus?

FREDDY

I didn't know what else to do. It felt like I was running out of options.

SHILOH

Okay, but now that you know the truth, what's the plan?

She looks at the business card as she toys with it.

FREDDY

I'm not leaving The Company. I can't. If I do then Seamus wins.

SHILOH

If you stay he still wins.

FREDDY

Not necessarily.

She holds up the business card.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

He hasn't made director yet.

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - LINCOLN MEMORIAL - DAY

Freddy walks beside Kira in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial. Kira hangs on her every word.

KIRA

And there are others that you know of who have been put in similar situations?

FREDDY

There are two others that have admitted as much to me.

KIRA

This is deeply concerning indeed. I will be looking into this immediately. Thank you for bringing this to my attention, Freddy.

FREDDY

What should I do in the meantime?

KIRA

Don't let on that anything is different. I will be in contact once I have assessed the situation.

FREDDY

What about the others?

KIRA

I promise it won't be for long. Don't worry, Freddy, I'll handle everything.

Freddy nods, reassured.

INT. COLLEGE ART STUDIO - NIGHT

Freddy walks around the bright, but messy studio as she looks at all of the half-finished art work.

FREDDY

Which of these is yours?

Wilder ties an apron over his clothes as he steps out of a supply room.

WILDER

The ugly one on the end.

Freddy spots a half-painted canvas at the end of the table. She moves closer to inspect it.

FREDDY
It's not ugly.

He stands beside her and scowls down at the painting as if personally offended.

WILDER
You're a terrible liar.

FREDDY
It just doesn't know what it wants to be yet.

WILDER
It better hurry up and figure it out, or I'm going to fail this class.

FREDDY
Isn't art your major?

WILDER
Sculpture is my major. Painting and Drawing was a mistaken attempt at trying to broaden my skills.

FREDDY
I'm not following. You're an artist. Shouldn't you just be able to go from one kind of art to another? I mean in dance, ballet is what I'm best at, but I can still dance in other styles.

WILDER
It's different with art. When I'm sculpting it doesn't matter what medium I'm using because it's always tactile. I'm always the one in control and I get to direct what happens next. But paint--

FREDDY
--Has a mind of it's own?

WILDER
Annoyingly so.

FREDDY
Will you show me how?

WILDER
How to paint? We just discussed--

FREDDY
--No, how to sculpt. How to be in control of it.

WILDER
That depends. Will you teach me how to dance?

Freddy laughs and slips her hand into his.

FREDDY
A lesson for a lesson.

Wilder excitedly leads her over to an empty table and disappears back into the store room.

INT. COLLEGE ART STUDIO - NIGHT

Freddy takes a half-formed clay sculpture, and kneads it back into a ball in frustration.

Wilder watches her from across the table. His own clay sculpture sits completed beside him.

FREDDY
I don't understand what I'm doing wrong.

WILDER
You're giving up too easily.

FREDDY
It's not doing what I want.

WILDER
Did you think that maybe that's because you're going about it in the wrong way?

Freddy blows hair out of her face in exasperation.

FREDDY
Why is there more than one way to do things in art? Why don't you have any rules?

WILDER
We have plenty. The whole point is to learn them so we know how to break them.

FREDDY

That seems counter-intuitive.

She slams the clay ball on the table.

WILDER

Will you let me help you?

FREDDY

Be my guest.

Freddy pushes the clay towards him.

He holds his hands out to her.

WILDER

I didn't say I'd do it for you.

The moment suddenly feels charged.

Freddy takes his hands, and he positions her hands on top of the clay. He leaves his hands on top of hers.

She blushes as he moves her hands over the clay and molds it step by step.

Freddy watches with growing excitement as the clay takes shape beneath their hands.

She glances up at Wilder, but he watches her instead of the clay.

FREDDY

You can do this with your eyes closed, can't you?

WILDER

I could. But I don't want to.

Freddy blushes again and looks back down at the sculpture forming beneath her hands.

FREDDY

If I asked you to, though, would you?

WILDER

Of course.

She looks back up at him and his eyes are shut even though his hands still move over top of hers.

Freddy studies him for a moment.

FREDDY
Wilder?

WILDER
Hmm?

FREDDY
Can I kiss you?

Wilder smiles with his eyes still shut.

WILDER
I thought you'd never ask.

Freddy takes a deep breath and leans across the table to kiss him, and, after a beat, he returns it.

They pull apart for a moment. Each studies the other. Breathless.

WILDER (CONT'D)
How did you know?

FREDDY
Know what?

WILDER
That the only reason I wanted to become an artist was to have a *Ghost* moment.

FREDDY
You're impossible.

WILDER
But you still want to kiss me again, don't you?

Freddy smiles and moves her hands to Wilder's face where the clay leaves handprints.

She pulls him closer and kisses him again.

INT. THE COMPANY - MAIN STUDIO - DAY

Freddy stretches in the corner alone. She looks up when Kyle walks in, and after a moment he approaches her.

FREDDY
You're here early.

KYLE

I was hoping I would catch you
before anyone else showed up.

FREDDY

(exasperated)

Kyle--

KYLE

--Look, I know I'm the last person
you want to work with right now,
but the powers that be want us to
be partners. I can't change that. I
want to be able dance with you,
Freddy. And if there is some way
that I can help make that work for
you then I'm all ears.

Freddy takes that in.

FREDDY

I think I know someone who can
help.

INT. SHILOH'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Freddy crashes to the floor hard, and rolls over onto her
back to look up at an apologetic Kyle.

FREDDY

This isn't working.

Kyle extends his hand to help Freddy up, but she pretends she
doesn't see it and gets up on her own.

Shiloh sighs in frustration as he watches them.

SHILOH

That's because you aren't
communicating.

Freddy and Kyle look at Shiloh, and then at each other.

KYLE

You keep leaning too far forward.
It's making it hard to get a good
grip.

FREDDY

I think my positioning is perfectly
fine. You're just not holding me
properly.

KYLE

I'm holding you the same way that every other guy holds every other girl.

FREDDY

Maybe that's--

Shiloh steps in-between them.

SHILOH

--Okay, that's enough. I said communicate. Not criticize.

Freddy and Kyle grudgingly shut up.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

But he's not wrong. You were leaning too far forward. But, Freddy was right, too.

KYLE

What do you mean? I was holding her exactly like we were taught.

SHILOH

Yes, you were. But obviously that's not working for Freddy. You both already know how to partner, what you need to do is learn how to partner with each other.

Freddy smiles as realization dawns on her.

FREDDY

(to herself)

Learn the rules so you know how to break them.

Shiloh holds out his hand, and Freddy takes it.

SHILOH

Arabesque on point.

Freddy reaches out her other hand to Shiloh, and he takes it as she moves into an arabesque.

He spins her so that he's behind her. He places a hand gingerly on her waist.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

How's that?

FREDDY
A little higher.

Shiloh adjusts his hand.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
Better.

SHILOH
Good. Now I want you two to try the
variation. Nice and slow. Okay?

Freddy meets his eyes in the mirror and nods.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
If something feels wrong, tell
Kyle. You always have that right.

Shiloh moves and Kyle takes his place.

Kyle's hands hover over Freddy's hips, suddenly unsure.

She takes his hands in her own and places them where she
feels comfortable.

Shiloh starts the music.

Kyle maintains eye contact with Freddy in the mirror as he
moves her through the positions.

The movements are slow, and less than perfect, but Freddy
works with him rather than against him.

INT. THE COMPANY - MAIN STUDIO - DAY

Freddy and Kyle dance together in front of Seamus.

Claire, RIORDAN, 25, the other male lead, and a couple other
MALE DANCERS stand in the back.

Though still shaky in some places, the improvement in their
connection can't be missed.

Seamus looks almost impressed as their dance comes to an end.

SEAMUS
Much improved. It's actually
starting to feel like you both
might want this.

FREDDY
We do.

SEAMUS

Glad to finally hear you say it.
Make sure that you practice with
the understudies as well. I won't
have any last minute hiccups if
something happens to one of you
before opening night.

Celeste knocks on the door.

CELESTE

Sorry to interrupt, but Seamus, you
have your meeting.

SEAMUS

Of course. We won't have time to
run this again at the next
rehearsal since we have to move on
to the pas de trois, but I want it
clean the next time I ask for it.

KYLE

We'll keep working on it, Sir.

Seamus gives a half-hearted wave of his hand as he follows
Celeste out of the studio.

Riordan steps forward to join Freddy and Kyle as they get to
work on the pas de trois.

INT. THE COMPANY - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Freddy walks past the small studio, but stops when she sees
Aisling rehearsing.

She watches and smiles at Aisling's sheer joy, but once she
recognizes the music Freddy's smile fades.

INT. THE COMPANY - SMALL STUDIO - NIGHT

Aisling arabesques on pointe with a huge smile as if it were
the easiest thing in the world.

Her smile falters when she spots Freddy in the mirror, and
she goes to stop the music.

FREDDY

That's not the music for the Rose
Adagio, is it?

AISLING
I wasn't expecting anyone to be
here this late.

FREDDY
Aisling, why are you rehearsing
that part?

Aisling looks out into the hall to make sure they're alone.
She crosses to Freddy and takes Freddy's hands in hers.

AISLING
Promise you won't tell anyone? I
promised Seamus I would keep it a
secret.

Freddy hesitates as she takes that in.

FREDDY
I won't say anything.

AISLING
Seamus says that the patron for
Sleeping Beauty is interested in
making me the understudy for
Aurora.

FREDDY
And you have to keep this a secret?

AISLING
Well, it's not guaranteed, or
anything. Seamus didn't want me to
say anything until the patron makes
his choice.
(sheepish)
I couldn't help practicing. Wishful
thinking, ya know?

FREDDY
Do you know when he's going to make
his choice?

AISLING
They haven't said. Not for a week
at least.

Freddy visibly relaxes.

AISLING (CONT'D)
Why? Is something wrong?

FREDDY
No. That should be plenty of time.

AISLING
Plenty of time?

FREDDY
(quickly)
Yes, for you to have the Rose
Adagio down pat.

Aisling beams, and Freddy tries to match it.

INT. WILDER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The furniture lines the walls to make a cleared space in the center.

Freddy stands turned out, and laughs as Wilder attempts to copy her.

FREDDY
You have to use your hips.

WILDER
Is that not what I'm doing?

FREDDY
Watch me.

He watches as she demonstrates slowly how to turn out first one leg and then the other.

Wilder clumsily manages to get in a similar position.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
Good. Now you're in first position.
Step out with your right foot.

He steps out.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
And now you're in second position.

WILDER
This isn't so hard.

FREDDY
Watch my feet as I transition into
third.

Freddy crosses her right foot in front of the left so that the right heel rests just beside the arch of her left foot.

Wilder watches and attempts to follow, but he wobbles and nearly falls.

Freddy stays in third position as Wilder plops down on the couch with a defeated sigh.

WILDER

How does that not hurt you? I don't think my legs will ever forgive me for tonight.

FREDDY

I never said it didn't hurt.

She effortlessly moves through all of the positions.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

I've just gotten used to it.

WILDER

But if it's painful then why do you do it?

Freddy looks lost in thought for a moment.

Wilder watches as she absentmindedly dances as she thinks.

FREDDY

At some point I guess I stopped thinking of it as being painful. It was more like a reminder of how powerful I could be. That no matter what kind of disappointments or terrible things happened in the rest of my life, as long as I could dance I could do anything. It's strange to think that I used to believe that nothing could hurt more than ballet.

Wilder goes to her, and she takes his hands.

WILDER

Used to? What hurts more than ballet?

FREDDY

Not being able to do it anymore.

Wilder searches her face as if he expects her to say more, but he eventually smiles and leans in to kiss her.

Freddy pulls away before he can.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

You're very distracting. I'm supposed to be teaching you how to dance.

WILDER

I'll take a rain-check.

FREDDY

Oh, you're not getting off that easy. It's time we see if you can follow music.

She turns to the stereo, and Wilder reaches his hands out and playfully grabs her hips as he pulls her back to him.

Freddy freezes as her mind FLASHES:

Seamus' hands grip her hips possessively as he pulls her against him.

Kyle's hands grab her hips roughly to keep her from falling.

BACK in the moment Freddy elbows Wilder hard as she pushes away from him.

Freddy stays turned away as she tries to control her breathing.

WILDER

Ow! What the hell?

Wilder rubs the spot in his chest where Freddy hit him. He notices her deep breaths.

WILDER (CONT'D)

Freddy, what's wrong?

Wilder reaches out and gently touches her shoulder.

FREDDY

Don't touch me!

Freddy whirls on him as Wilder takes a step back. He holds his hands up in front of him.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

Please, just, don't touch me.

WILDER

Freddy, what's going on?

FREDDY

Nothing. I'm just overtired.

WILDER

That wasn't nothing. And that wasn't something people do when they're tired.

(off her look)

I've noticed something was off. I figured you would tell me in your own time, but--

FREDDY

--Nothing is off. I'm fine.

WILDER

You used to jump every time I accidentally brushed your hand at the coffee shop.

Freddy grabs an armchair and tries to drag it back into place. Her sweater falls off her shoulder and reveals the nail marks there.

WILDER (CONT'D)

You have marks on your shoulders that never seem to heal.

Freddy quickly covers her shoulder, and Wilder moves to help her with the chair. Freddy flinches and backs away. He shoves the chair back into place.

WILDER (CONT'D)

You flinch if I move too quickly, or when you don't expect it.

FREDDY

Don't--

WILDER

--You always tensed up if I touched you, so I started waiting for you to touch me first.

Freddy grabs the coffee table as Wilder grabs the other end.

It hovers between them.

FREDDY

But you're tired of being patient? Is that it?

WILDER

I want to know what's going on with you. I want you to be honest with me, Freddy.

She moves forward and forces Wilder to walk backwards.

FREDDY

Well I want you to be honest with me, too.

He stops and forces her to stop too.

WILDER

I don't hide anything from you.

FREDDY

Admit that you like me because I'm a dancer. You were always fascinated by it at the coffee shop. So willing to help me and cover shifts whenever I needed to leave for an audition.

WILDER

I like you because of you. I don't give a shit about ballet.

Freddy drops her end of the table.

FREDDY

Then you obviously don't give a shit about me.

WILDER

Will you listen to yourself?

He sets down his end of the table and moves towards her.

Freddy steps back as he comes closer. Wilder finally stops.

WILDER (CONT'D)

I can't force you to be open with me, but don't ever say I don't care about you.

FREDDY

You're a guy. There's only one thing you care about, and it has nothing to do with my well being.

WILDER

If that's what you believe than you can leave.

FREDDY

Gladly.

Freddy moves towards the bedroom and Wilder watches as she throws her clothes haphazardly into her duffel bag.

INT. THE COMPANY - SMALL STUDIO - DAY

Freddy rehearses on her own. Her full duffel bag sits off to the side of the studio, and beside it a CAMCORDER records her rehearsal.

She looks exhausted as if she's been here all night.

Freddy struggles with the steps and falls out of a turn to land hard on the ground.

Freddy lies there and stares at the ceiling. Her eyes brim with tears.

FREDDY
(murmurs)
You idiot.

The door to the studio SLAMS shut, and Freddy jumps as she turns to see Seamus storm towards her.

SEAMUS
You went to the Board?!

Freddy blanches as she hurries to stand.

FREDDY
What, I--

SEAMUS
--Half of the Board serve as Patrons. You thought they weren't aware? They were the ones that green-lit the whole thing.

He stalks towards her, and Freddy scrambles to back away.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)
And now I have them breathing down my neck because they think I can't keep you sluts in line.

FREDDY
You can't do this.

SEAMUS
I can do whatever the hell I want.

Seamus backs Freddy into a corner and blocks her in.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

You still want to be a principal,
don't you?

Freddy shuts her eyes and tries to turn away.

Seamus roughly grabs her chin and forces her to look at him.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

(dangerously calm)

I can make that extremely easy for
you. Or I can make it impossible.
As long as I still make director
that choice is yours.

FREDDY

Please, let me go.

SEAMUS

Claire will dance Victoria, and
you'll be her understudy.

FREDDY

Please--

He shoves her hard up against the wall and presses himself
against her.

Freddy cries silently as his hands roam over her body.

She writhes under his grip as he kisses her neck.

SEAMUS

If you keep your mouth shut then I
might still let you keep it.

Celeste opens the door to the studio and pauses when she sees
the scene before her.

CELESTE

Johnson is waiting for you in your
office.

Seamus pulls away from Freddy with one last withering look.
He snatches the camcorder and stalks out of the studio.

Freddy stays with her back flat against the wall as she and
Celeste stare at each other.

Celeste looks away first as if she can't bear to look at
Freddy any longer. She shuts the studio door behind her.

Freddy crumples to the floor as she breaks into sobs. Her
nails already digging into her shoulders.

INT. THE COMPANY - MAIN STUDIO - DAY

Freddy, eyes red, still reels from the events of the morning. She stands along the side of the studio with the other Dancers, but she stares off into space completely unfocused.

Claire knocks into her, and Freddy comes back to the world as she looks at Claire in confusion.

Claire tilts her head to the center of the room.

The whole room watches in silence as Aisling performs with several others.

As Freddy watches she notices that Aisling bleeds through her pointe shoes, and cries silently as she dances.

Aisling never misses a step.

The Dancers finally finish, and Bea steps forward in concern.

Aisling runs out of the studio before Bea can say anything.

Freddy follows after her.

INT. THE COMPANY - BATHROOM - DAY

Freddy runs into the bathroom to find Aisling sobbing on the floor as she rips her pointe shoes off her bloody feet.

Freddy quickly soaks some paper towel in the sink and kneels beside Aisling.

FREDDY

Here, let me help you.

Aisling jerks away from Freddy's touch, and curls even more into herself.

Freddy watches her with a sinking realization.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

Oh, Aisling--

AISLING

--That patron...Seamus told me he wanted to meet me...that he wanted to get to know me.

FREDDY

You don't have to tell me this.

AISLING

He asked me to prove to him how
much I wanted the part.

 FREDDY

Aisling--

 AISLING

--I didn't know what he meant. By
the time I realized--

 FREDDY

--It was too late.

 AISLING

I couldn't stop him.

 FREDDY

No, you couldn't have.

Aisling pauses at that.

 AISLING

What do you mean?

 FREDDY

Just that I...I know what you...I
understand--

 AISLING

--You knew.

Aisling pulls away from Freddy in horror, and uses the sink
to help her stand.

 AISLING (CONT'D)

You knew what would happen, and you
didn't say anything?!

 FREDDY

Aisling, it's not like that--

 AISLING

--Did you know?

Freddy reels back as if slapped.

 FREDDY

Yes, but--

 AISLING

--Get out.

FREDDY
Aisling, please--

AISLING
(screams)
--Get out!

Freddy jumps and scrambles for the door. She pauses with her hand on the door knob and looks back at Aisling.

Aisling sinks back to the ground and crumbles into herself as she sobs. She crosses her arms over her chest and grips her shoulders tightly as she rocks in place.

Freddy fights her own tears as she rushes out of the bathroom.

INT. FREDDY/SHILOH'S APARTMENT - FREDDY'S ROOM - DAY

Freddy sits on her bed and watches the video of her breakdown on her laptop with an empty expression.

A series of loud KNOCKS sound from the other room, but Freddy stays put.

SHILOH (O.S.)
Give it a rest--

CLAIRE (O.S.)
--Where is she?

Freddy glances up from the laptop and looks at her door.

SHILOH (O.S.)
She's not here.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
You are such an enabler, do you know that?

SHILOH (O.S.)
I like to call it being a friend.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
Yeah, a pretty shitty one.

SHILOH (O.S.)
Leave her alone, Claire.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
Touch me again, and I'll cut you.

Claire throws Freddy's door open and storms in. Shiloh follows a beat behind, furious.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

Claire grabs Freddy's laptop and sees the video.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Seriously?

She shows the laptop to Shiloh. The wind goes out of his sails, and he gives Freddy a pitying look.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
For Christ's sake, did you at least
hide the knives?

Claire shoves the laptop at Shiloh, and pushes him into the other room.

She slams the door in his face and turns to Freddy.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Get up. You have rehearsals.

Freddy rolls over so her back faces Claire.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
That sad puppy dog shit may work on
Shiloh, but I couldn't care less if
you're miserable. Get your ass out
of bed and get to work.

FREDDY
The part is yours. I don't want it
anymore.

Claire grabs Freddy and pulls her out of the bed.

CLAIRE
If that were true then you wouldn't
be sitting here watching Freddy's
greatest hits on YouTube.

Freddy pulls away from Claire's grip.

FREDDY
Just take the part and leave me
alone.

CLAIRE
Is that really what you want,
Freddy? To be left alone?
(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

So you can just sit here and lie to yourself that you really didn't want it anyway so walking away must have been the right thing to do?

FREDDY

It's not like I had another choice!

CLAIRE

Fucking fight for it! You have been through fucking hell to get this far. We all have. You can't let him win now.

FREDDY

Why do you even care?

CLAIRE

You went to the Board. You tried to do something to change the system. You could've kept your head down and let everything play out until Seamus made you principal, but you fought for all of us.

FREDDY

How did you know about all of that?

CLAIRE

You aren't the only one who likes to get to the studio early. And Seamus wasn't exactly being quiet.

FREDDY

Then you know that blew up in my face.

CLAIRE

It also earned you a lot of respect from the rest of The Company. Don't give me that look. You know I'm a terrible gossip.

FREDDY

Why now? Why didn't you come tell me all of this two weeks ago?

CLAIRE

I figured you needed some time to miss ballet, and eventually you would drag yourself back like the relentless bitch you used to be.

Claire notices the pictures on Freddy's mirror and clocks several of the two of them together. Always rivals. Sometimes friends.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
And Aisling came back yesterday.

Freddy freezes, and Claire turns somber.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
We all thought she would be the one to lawyer up.

FREDDY
Why didn't she?

CLAIRE
You know why.

After a moment, Freddy steels herself and goes to her closet.

INT. THE COMPANY - MAIN STUDIO - DAY

Freddy and Claire walk into the packed studio, and the conversations fall silent when everyone spots Freddy.

The Dancers acknowledge Freddy with respect. They look at her with a sense of hope.

Celeste notices the shift in attention and sees Freddy. She crosses the studio as quickly as her leg will allow.

CELESTE
Freddy, a moment?

Claire crosses her arms, already on the defensive.

FREDDY
It's okay, Claire. Go warm up.

Claire glares at Celeste as she goes to Kyle and Riordan.

Freddy steps back into the...

HALLWAY

Celeste follows her and shuts the studio door behind them.

CELESTE
I wanted to make sure that you're okay. I know things have been difficult these past few weeks.

FREDDY
Difficult? Is that what you call
it?

CELESTE
Freddy, I didn't mean--

FREDDY
--Does that make it easier for you?
Telling yourself that sending us to
be raped is just a difficult task
that needs to be done, and not some
terrible display of power that you
and Seamus lord over us?

CELESTE
I warned you not to come back. I
told you what would happen.

FREDDY
No, you told me he would make
director. You never told me why I
shouldn't let that happen. You
never said that it wasn't just me.

CELESTE
Freddy, you have to understand I
don't like this anymore than you.

FREDDY
Then say something. Maybe if you
had been honest with me you could
have prevented what happened to
Aisling. And maybe if you had any
backbone at all you could have
prevented what happened to me.

CELESTE
I'm sorry--

FREDDY
--Bit late for that.

Freddy pushes past Celeste and heads back into the studio.

INT. SHILOH'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Exhausted, Freddy runs through new choreography with Claire.

Shiloh, Kyle, and Riordan stand off to the side and watch as
Freddy messes up the steps.

Freddy stalks off to the other side of the studio in frustration. She pllops down beside her dance bag.

Claire shoots Kyle a look, and he turns off the music.

CLAIRE

You two walk Riordan through how the blocking needs to go for the pas de trois. We don't have time for any set backs.

Kyle and Shiloh move into the center with Riordan as Claire goes to Freddy.

FREDDY

I'll never catch up. He changed so much of it. There isn't enough time.

CLAIRE

Which is exactly why I'm spending my date night helping you.

Claire looks at Kyle and gives him a small smile.

She catches herself and turns back to Freddy.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Don't make me regret this.

FREDDY

What did you tell Kyle? You know, about all of this.

CLAIRE

The truth. Mine at least. He has his suspicions about you, but I wouldn't tell him anything. That's your choice.

Freddy's eyes suddenly fill with tears.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I swear if you cry right now I will slap you.

Freddy laughs and quickly wipes away her tears.

FREDDY

I can't help it.

CLAIRE
 Shiloh has ruined you by letting
 you be this weepy pathetic mess for
 far too long.

SHILOH
 I heard that.

CLAIRE
 You were supposed to.

Claire and Shiloh continue to bicker as she moves back into
 the center.

SHILOH
 You can't always blame everything
 on me.

CLAIRE
 Hold on a minute here. Am I wrong?

SHILOH
 I'm--

CLAIRE
 --I said, am I wrong?

Kyle rolls his eyes and comes over to Freddy. He offers her a
 hand up, and after a beat, she takes it.

INT. THE COMPANY - SMALL STUDIO - DAY

Freddy stands beside Riordan as she watches Claire dance with
 Kyle. Freddy's attention solely focused on the steps.

Bea runs the rehearsal with an eagle eye.

Claire shares a look with Freddy in the mirror.

BEA
 Eyes off the mirror, Claire. You're
 supposed to be in love with Kyle,
 not yourself.

Claire turns her attention back to Kyle.

SEAMUS (O.S.)
 Freddy, trade places with Claire.

Everyone turns to see Seamus in the doorway.

Claire moves to the side, and Freddy takes her place.

Freddy fumbles a few steps, but manages to make it through the rest of the number.

From Seamus' expression that was more than he expected.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)
Quite the quick learner, aren't you?

FREDDY
It'll be better next time.

SEAMUS
I don't doubt it will be.

Seamus acknowledges Claire, Kyle, and Riordan.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)
My apologies for being late. My Board meeting ran long, and there were many things to discuss now that I'm the new artistic director.

Freddy tenses as Seamus meets her gaze.

BEA
Congratulations. Would you like to take your rehearsal back, or should I continue?

SEAMUS
By all means, carry on.

His eyes linger on Freddy a beat too long. Finally he turns to leave.

Bea motions for Claire to resume her place beside Kyle.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)
Keep Freddy in for the rest of the rehearsal. She'll dance on opening night.

Freddy lets out a shaky breath.

INT. THE COMPANY - CHANGE ROOMS - DAY

Freddy tends to her bleeding feet while Claire puffs on a cigarette and uses her lighter to set fire to the toe part of a pointe shoe.

FREDDY
We have to do something.

CLAIRE

Like what? There's no one else you can complain to. He's as high up as they get.

FREDDY

What about the others? You said they respected me for speaking up, why don't they come forward, too?

Claire grabs the other shoe, cuts off the square of satin on the toe, and brings the lighter to the frayed satin edges.

CLAIRE

Maybe that would have worked if you hadn't tipped Seamus off. Now I'm sure he's been working to cover up his tracks.

Celeste steps into view from behind the lockers.

CELESTE

Actually, he delegated that task to me.

Celeste holds up a flash-drive, and Freddy and Claire look between it and each other.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Freddy scrolls on Celeste's laptop as she skims damning emails, texts, calendar events, and pages worth of notes.

CELESTE

Every few weeks or so he gives me his laptop to purge of anything like this. As you can see, I always made a copy first.

FREDDY

But why bother if you weren't going to say anything?

CELESTE

At first I stayed silent out of a sick sense of loyalty. When I was injured and the doctors told me I would never dance again, my entire world shattered. Ballet was the only thing I've ever been good at. Even if I can't dance anymore I didn't want to be away from it.

(MORE)

CELESTE (CONT'D)

Seamus gave me a chance to stay, so I did.

FREDDY

Did you know about all of this before you were injured?

CELESTE

I knew enough.

Freddy looks back at the laptop.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

Eventually I realized that I needed to come forward, but at that point I had seen it go on for so long that there was no way to make sure Seamus couldn't cover it all up by dragging me through the mud. He could ruin any credibility I have.

FREDDY

Then what's changed your mind now?

CELESTE

When Kira came to talk to Seamus about your allegations, I'd never seen him so terrified. He was so close to losing everything he had ever wanted, and he was floundering for a way to fix it. I realized that was the very same feeling that he'd been preying on for years from all of you.

Celeste sits back and assesses Freddy.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

You scare him, and he won't stop until he has all of you under his thumb.

Freddy closes the laptop.

FREDDY

I already tried to stop him, and that failed.

Celeste pushes the laptop towards Freddy.

CELESTE

Then expose all of them.

Freddy looks from Celeste to the laptop, uncertain.

EXT. WILDER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Freddy hesitates in front of Wilder's door, and builds up her courage. She quickly KNOCKS on the door.

After a few tense moments, Wilder opens it.

INT. WILDER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Freddy stands awkwardly.

Wilder hands her a cup of coffee and sits down on the couch with his own cup.

WILDER

Don't you want to sit down?

FREDDY

Not really.

She fidgets uneasily and sets the coffee cup down.

WILDER

What are you doing here, Freddy?

FREDDY

Seamus finally decided I would be dancing opening night.

WILDER

(dry)

Congratulations.

FREDDY

It's a really great opportunity. Anyone who's anyone in the ballet world will be there. It could be a real career defining performance.

WILDER

Maybe you should be rehearsing for it then?

FREDDY

The thing is, it might also be the last time I dance. Ever.

WILDER

What are you talking about? You aren't making any sense.

Freddy shakily takes a seat on the couch and faces him.

FREDDY

Do you remember what I said about nothing hurting more than not dancing? Well, I haven't been doing much dancing lately.

WILDER

Was it as bad as you thought it would be?

FREDDY

Worse.

WILDER

Then why did you stop?

FREDDY

Because I hate that I need it.

Freddy breaks down.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

I tried so hard not to be, but I'm still an awful person.

WILDER

No you're not--

FREDDY

--I agreed to come back and work for the man that raped me because I thought I could outsmart him, and still get everything I ever wanted.

Wilder hangs back, and waits for her to continue.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

When I found out that he was doing it to everyone, I tried to stop it by going behind his back, but I fucked it up. Someone else got hurt because I put what I wanted ahead of everything else.

WILDER

Freddy, you aren't the awful person in any of this.

FREDDY

You don't get it. After all of this I still want to go back. After everything I still can't walk away.

WILDER

You love it.

FREDDY

More than anything.

WILDER

Then don't let it destroy you.

FREDDY

But if I try to say anything I
could lose ballet forever.

After a moment Wilder gets up and goes into the bedroom. He returns with the now finished and surprisingly beautiful painting from the art studio.

WILDER

I was so quick to dismiss this as a waste of my time. It made me angry, and I lost sleep over it. I felt like I was wasting my energy on this when I had so many other important things I could be doing. You took one look at it, and simply said that it just hadn't figured out what it wanted to be.

He hands the painting to Freddy and sits back down.

WILDER (CONT'D)

I've always gone into my art with a vision of what I want to happen, and if I can't achieve that then I throw it away or start over. I had always blamed the art for not cooperating with me, but you made me realize that I was the one not cooperating with the art.

Wilder holds out his hands, and Freddy takes them.

WILDER (CONT'D)

But when it comes to you, you let ballet have complete control. Maybe it's time you learned how to take some of that back? Like realizing that ballet can't leave you? It won't have that kind of power unless you let it.

FREDDY

You don't think I've been trying?
It's not that easy, Wilder.

WILDER

It won't be. But this time you
don't have to do it alone if you
don't want to.

Freddy gives him a small smile through her tears and hastily
tries to wipe her cheeks.

FREDDY

Do you have any tearjerkers you can
put on?

WILDER

Oh, my collection is endless.

Freddy gives a shaky laugh.

INT. THE KENNEDY CENTER - COSTUME ROOM - DAY

Freddy stands in front of a mirror as a SEAMSTRESS flits
around her and makes final alterations.

Freddy watches the line of Dancers in various costumes that
extends behind her. They giggle and chat amongst themselves,
but Freddy notices that the smiles and laughter don't always
reach their eyes.

SEAMSTRESS

All done dear.

Freddy steps off the raised podium, and Claire passes by to
take her place.

Freddy grabs Claire's arm.

FREDDY

(hushed)

See if you can get any of them to
Shiloh's tonight. I have an idea.

CLAIRE

About fucking time.

INT. THE KENNEDY CENTER - MAIN STAGE - DAY

Freddy, still in her costume, stands in the wings and watches
Claire perform a solo. She's spectacular as she emotes
through every step.

Claire takes her bow, and exits the stage as Freddy takes her
place. Seamus and Celeste enter the theatre with Patrons and
Board Members as Freddy takes the stage.

As she dances Freddy spots Celeste break away from the group and head up to the projection booth.

Freddy hits all the steps, technically proficient, but she stays emotionally distant from the dance.

She notices that the Patrons watch her with an eagerness.

The Board Members whisper to each other in concern.

Seamus watches her, aloof, but she can see the anger buried in his expression.

Freddy finishes the solo, and takes her bow.

Seamus beckons her to join him and the Board Members in the theatre, but she heads back off stage.

Claire waits for her in the wings.

CLAIRE

You better know what you're doing.

They both peek out at the audience and spot Seamus smooth talking concerned Board Members.

FREDDY

I can't stop the Board from making
Seamus the director, but I can make
him look like a fool.

Claire watches Freddy head back stage with pride.

INT. SHILOH'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Freddy stands amazed in front of a growing group of both male and female Dancers.

The group stretches and chats amongst themselves.

Freddy pulls Claire aside.

FREDDY

Did you invite the whole company?

CLAIRE

You asked me to get people here.
Don't hate me for being good at my
job.

Claire goes to leave, but Freddy pulls her back.

FREDDY
But what did you tell them?

CLAIRE
That you have a plan.

Claire goes off to join the group, and Freddy steels herself.

FREDDY
Everyone, if I could have your
attention please?

There's some shuffling as the Dancers settle in, but they all
turn to Freddy expectantly.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
I wanted to get as many of you here
tonight as possible because I think
I've found a way to get rid of the
patron system for good.

Murmurs spread through the crowd.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
I won't call any of you out by name
tonight, but many people in this
room have been victims of that
system. I'm asking that you consent
to let me use your names and any
evidence we have about what
happened to you, and put it out in
the open.

A group of Dancers grab their things and leave.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
You don't have to commit to being a
part of anything physically, but if
you don't agree to let me use that
information then I won't have
anything to prove what's been
happening.

DANCER #1 speaks up, curious.

DANCER #1
How do you know it will work?

FREDDY
I don't.

DANCER #2 scoffs angrily.

DANCER #2

Then why should we trust you?

FREDDY

Look, I don't care if I'm the only one that physically stands up against Seamus. I'll do it on my own if I have to. But I always used to think that this was a fight just between me and him. That's how I've been treating it for months. Now I know that it's so much bigger than me. It's not just my dreams at stake anymore. This is about all of us, and all the people that come after us.

Claire, Shiloh, and Kyle join her at the front of the room.

Unsure murmurs spread throughout the rest of the Dancers, and Freddy waits with bated breath as she watches.

DANCER #1

What exactly do you plan to do?

DANCER #2

If you want to take our information to the cops, we can do that ourselves.

The Dancers murmur in agreement. Several more go to leave.

FREDDY

No one is going to the cops. That takes time, and we want to make sure Seamus can't come back from this.

The Dancers stop and turn back to Freddy.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

I'm going to choreograph a dance for us to perform on opening night while we expose all of the evidence on stage.

Murmurs spread through the Dancers as they mull it over.

DANCER #1

We could lose our careers for this.

FREDDY

Yes, we could. But so could Seamus.

Aisling stands up in the back of the studio, and takes Freddy by surprise. She's no longer a bright and happy girl.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
Aisling, I'm sorry--

AISLING
--I didn't come here for an apology.

Aisling walks through the crowd and stops in front of Freddy.

AISLING (CONT'D)
I haven't forgiven you for what happened, and I don't know if I ever can. But you're right, this is about all of us. I'll stay.

More and more Dancers follow Aisling until almost all of them join Freddy at the front of the studio.

FREDDY
We better get started then.

INT. FREDDY/SHILOH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Freddy sits on the couch as she sifts through all of the evidence from Celeste's USB on her laptop.

She clicks through the files faster and faster in her frustration.

Freddy finally shuts the laptop and shoves it away from her.

SHILOH (O.S.)
Why are you still up?

Shiloh stands in the doorway to his bedroom, half-asleep.

FREDDY
None of this feels like enough.

SHILOH
You have files and files worth of damning evidence and it doesn't feel like enough?

FREDDY
Seamus will find a way to get out of it. He'll say it was taken out of context, or that it was just a misunderstanding, or that--

SHILOH

--Okay, stop before you start spiraling.

Freddy grudgingly pauses and watches Shiloh go into the kitchen. He returns with a carton of ice cream and spoons.

She gratefully takes the ice cream as he sits beside her.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

So, Seamus--

FREDDY

--Is a master manipulator.

SHILOH

Yes, but that doesn't mean he can get out of every terrible thing he does.

FREDDY

I've never seen him get caught.

SHILOH

There is a first time for everything.

FREDDY

That's not very comforting.

SHILOH

Sorry. But, Freddy, you don't just have these files, you have the testimonies of a bunch of other dancers, too.

FREDDY

Yes, but they're all from people who were assaulted in the past. When The Company takes this to court you don't think they're going to point out that none of us said anything when it happened?

She hands him the ice cream.

SHILOH

Maybe, but if there are multiple people speaking up they'll know it can't just be a coincidence.

FREDDY

Do you think there is even the slightest chance that he will get to walk away from this unscathed?

SHILOH

Honestly? I think it's possible.

Freddy takes that in.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

But I don't think that you should stop trying.

FREDDY

I just wish there was a way to show what he's been doing.

SHILOH

It's too late to try and get any security footage, and he's too smart to get caught on camera anyway.

Freddy grabs her laptop and opens it with a sense of resignation.

FREDDY

I can look through the old rehearsal footage again. Celeste has years of it backed up on here. Maybe he slipped up somewhere.

SHILOH

Do you want any help?

FREDDY

(surprise)

You're not going to insist that I need to get some rest? Or even comment on my early call time?

SHILOH

Screw the call time. Neither of us are going to get any sleep until we figure out what to do.

Shiloh looks at Freddy expectantly, and much to his surprise Freddy pulls him into a tight hug.

FREDDY

Thank you.

He returns it.

INT. FREDDY/SHILOH'S APARTMENT - DAWN

Freddy struggles to stay awake as she finishes a rehearsal video and immediately starts another one.

Shiloh lies on the floor fast asleep. Celeste's laptop sits open in front of him.

Freddy's eyes droop as the video plays on.

A MUFFLED SLAM is audible through her headphones and Freddy jolts awake.

She sits up suddenly alert as she watches the video.

INT. THE KENNEDY CENTER - ATRIUM - DAY

Claire, Kyle, Aisling, and several other Dancers mingle with Patrons and Board Members.

Claire's smile looks strained as she scans the crowded room for Freddy. She steps away from the group.

Kyle and Aisling follow her.

KYLE

She'll be here.

CLAIRE

Has Shiloh answered you at all?

KYLE

No. But, I'm sure they're on their way.

AISLING

What if something happened?

Seamus talks animatedly with Rob and Kira across the room, but his eyes flash dangerously when he spots Claire.

CLAIRE

Seamus won't care. Freddy needs to get here now.

INT. FREDDY/SHILOH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Shiloh, dressed for the ballet, paces anxiously.

His phone RINGS and a call from Claire pops up on his phone.

Shiloh sends it to voice mail.

SHILOH

Freddy, are you nearly finished? If I ignore anymore of Claire's calls she will find a way to make my death look like an accident.

FREDDY (O.S.)

Almost ready.

INT. FREDDY/SHILOH'S APARTMENT - FREDDY'S ROOM - DAY

Freddy sits on her bed, completely ready, and watches her laptop intensely.

A video file exports. Nearly done.

Freddy's phone BUZZES with an incoming call, but she turns it over so the screen lies face down.

Shiloh's phone RINGS from the other room.

SHILOH (O.S.)

Freddy, we need to leave.

The export finishes.

Freddy quickly ejects the USB, and grabs her bag.

She rushes into the...

LIVING ROOM

Shiloh grimaces as he holds the phone away from his ear. Claire chews him out indistinctly on the other end.

Freddy holds up the USB, and Shiloh hangs up on the call.

FREDDY

I found a video that could work. But I needed to cut it together with a few other things.

SHILOH

You won't have any time to sneak it in to the projection booth. You'll barely make it backstage as it is.

Freddy tosses Shiloh the USB.

FREDDY

Just get it to Celeste and she'll take care of it.

She hurries out the door.

INT. THE KENNEDY CENTER - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Freddy rushes in and Claire jumps up from the makeup chair, furious. She's already in Victoria's first act costume.

Freddy dips behind a rack of costumes to change.

CLAIRE

Where have you been? Seamus made me
get ready when you were an hour
late for call. He's on the warpath
tonight.

Freddy comes out from behind the rack and does up the zipper on her costume.

FREDDY

More than usual?

Freddy slips into the seat in front of the mirror and starts to apply her makeup. Claire's gaze falls to the nail marks on Freddy's shoulders.

CLAIRE

The rest of us were getting
worried.

Claire grabs powder and a brush and moves to apply it to the nail marks.

Freddy puts out a hand to stop her.

FREDDY

Leave them. It's time I stopped
hiding everything.

The door to the room bursts open, and Seamus steps inside, completely furious.

SEAMUS

(to Claire)
Get out.

Claire scrambles out of the room. She shoots Freddy a worried glance as Seamus shuts the door behind her.

Freddy holds Seamus' gaze, frozen.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

The curtain is up in less than ten minutes. Don't just sit there. Finish getting ready.

Freddy continues to apply her makeup, but she's tense.

FREDDY

I'm sorry that I'm late.

SEAMUS

I don't care. I don't need to tell you how important tonight is. For both of us.

Seamus takes Freddy's hair out of its bun, and using the mirror, he positions it to frame her face.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

If you impress me tonight then I'll announce you as a new leading lady for The Company tomorrow morning.

Freddy focuses on her makeup and tries to ignore him when he leans down so his face hovers next to hers. He finds her eyes in the mirror.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

You still want that, don't you?

FREDDY

Of course.

SEAMUS

Then you know what you need to do.

Seamus kisses her cheek, and trails his kisses down her neck.

Freddy stiffens and shuts her eyes against it as her mind FLASHES:

Seamus' hands massage her shoulders as he whispers in her ear. Similar words. A similar night.

Hands tug at her clothes and pull at her roughly.

BACK in the moment Freddy stands up abruptly and pushes away from Seamus.

FREDDY

No!

Freddy spins to face him.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
I need to get ready for the
performance.

His eyes flash with a barely contained anger, but Freddy
takes a step towards him and forces him to move back.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
And that is all I need to do.

Seamus seethes, but Freddy stands her ground.

INT. THE KENNEDY CENTER - SIDE STAGE - NIGHT

Claire fidgets absentmindedly as she stands side stage with
the other Dancers.

SPEAKER (V.O.)
Two minutes to curtain. Freddy
Sparks to the stage.

Everyone looks around anxiously as they wait. Claire pushes
people out of her way as she moves towards her dance bag.

Claire searches her bag for something desperately.

Aisling maneuvers herself next to Claire.

AISLING
Freddy is coming, right?

CLAIRE
As far as I know.

Claire upends her bag.

AISLING
Claire, where is she?

Claire snatches her pack of cigarettes and her lighter.

CLAIRE
The dressing room. She just got
held up by Seamus.

Aisling watches as Claire pops a cigarette between her lips.
Claire raises the lighter, but Aisling snatches it.

AISLING
Pull yourself together.

CLAIRE
Who do you think--

Suddenly murmurs spread through the wings, and Aisling goes on pointe to look over the sea of people.

AISLING

She's here.

Dancers move out of the way as Freddy quickly makes her way past them and towards Claire and Aisling.

CLAIRE

Are you okay to go on?

Freddy clocks the unlit cigarette between Claire's fingers, and the lighter that Aisling holds hostage.

FREDDY

I'm better off than you at least.

CLAIRE

I'm stressed! Why is that such a crime?

MUSIC plays.

FREDDY

You'll have a chance to release it in the performance.

The curtain rises, and Freddy takes to the...

STAGE

Freddy performs an enthusiastic solo.

As she turns on pointe she spots Kyle in the wings. He gives her an encouraging nod as he waits for his cue.

Freddy lands her turn, and watches Kyle take to the stage from the corner of her eye.

He places a hand on her waist.

The MUSIC PITCHES UP an octave.

Kyle spins her to face him, and they share an intense, but understanding look as they dance a romantic duet.

He lifts her into the air.

Freddy holds her breath, but they land it.

She reaches out for Kyle with one hand as she flutters backwards on pointe.

Riordan takes her other hand and spins her into him.

The MUSIC RISES another octave.

Kyle now gone, Riordan seduces Freddy as they dance.

Freddy catches sight of Seamus in the wings.

He watches her possessively.

The MUSIC becomes DEAFENING.

Freddy leaps and Kyle catches her. She stiffens at his touch.

Kyle shoots her a worried look, but Freddy gives him a reassuring nod.

Kyle supports her as she dips into a low arabesque.

Riordan steals her from Kyle as they perform the trio.

Both men place their hands on Freddy as they fight over her.

SILENCE.

Freddy pulls away from her partners and dances a perfectly composed solo, but the emotion doesn't reach her eyes.

Kyle and Riordan come back on stage, and Freddy pirouettes into the...

WINGS

Freddy's composure cracks as she gasps for air, and doubles over.

Claire and Shiloh rush over to her.

The other Dancers watch in concern, but keep their distance.

FREDDY

Seamus--

CLAIRE

--He's in the audience. Celeste took care of it.

Freddy straightens as she fights to regain control, and looks out at all of the Dancers.

FREDDY

Shiloh, the video--

SHILOH

--It's all cued up for after the performance.

FREDDY

We need to do it now. The performance. All of it.

CLAIRE

This isn't what we rehearsed. We only have one chance and if we mess this up--

FREDDY

--We do it now, or not at all.

Claire and Freddy have a tense moment. A STAGEHAND with a walkie-talkie comes up to them.

STAGEHAND

Ms. Sparks, you're on in thirty seconds.

CLAIRE

Can you contact the booth with that?

STAGEHAND

Yes, of course--

Claire grabs the walkie-talkie and hands it to Shiloh.

CLAIRE

--Do what you need to do.

Shiloh takes off with the walkie-talkie as the Stagehand sputters.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Everyone get to your places and listen for your cues. It's time to ruin some careers.

The Dancers scurry to get in place.

Freddy turns back to the stage and watches Kyle and Riordan's performance.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Are you sure you can do this?

FREDDY

No. But I'm going to do it anyway.

Her cue comes, and Freddy plasters a smile back on as she dances energetically across the stage. A woman possessed.

She leaps and lands in Kyle's arms.

ON THE DROP CURTAIN

Behind them an old clip of an enthusiastic Freddy and Kyle rehearsing their gala piece in the studio plays.

ON STAGE

Kyle's eyes widen.

A murmur spreads through the Audience.

Phones pop up to record.

KYLE
(under his breath)
What's going on?

FREDDY
(under her breath)
Just trust me.

ON THE DROP CURTAIN

Someone off camera distracts Freddy and Kyle, and they pull apart laughing.

Seamus steps in and takes Kyle's place.

Seamus perform the steps with Freddy and brings her up into the lift with ease.

His hand higher on her leg than necessary, but otherwise innocent.

Seamus sets her down, but his hands linger on Freddy's shoulders as he coaches them.

ON STAGE

The MUSIC cuts out.

Freddy stops dancing and turns to face the Audience. A beat behind her Kyle follows her lead.

ON THE DROP CURTAIN

The video changes to screen-shots of text messages:

ROB (TEXT)
She's young. Are you sure that
Freddy will comply?

SEAMUS (TEXT)
She wants this. If she's smart
she'll do anything for it.

ROB (TEXT)
Then by all means take Ms. Sparks
under your wing and "mentor" her.

ON STAGE

The other Dancers solemnly take their places.

NEW MUSIC plays.

Freddy, Claire, and Aisling dance from their places on stage.
The Dancers around them stay still.

After each eight count more Dancers join them.

ON THE DROP CURTAIN

The screen-shots change to CAMCORDER FOOTAGE of Freddy lying
on the studio floor.

The volume on the video ROARS to life as Seamus barges in and
SLAMS the door behind him.

SEAMUS
You went to the Board?!

Freddy blanches as she hurries to stand up.

FREDDY
What, I--

SEAMUS
--Half of the Board serve as
Patrons. You thought they weren't
aware? They were the ones that
green-lit the whole thing.

He stalks towards her, and Freddy scrambles to back away.

ON STAGE

Claire and Shiloh shoot Freddy shocked looks.

SEAMUS (O.S.)
 And now I have them breathing down
 my neck because they think I can't
 keep you sluts in line.

Freddy focuses on the Audience, and spots Wilder.

He watches the video, completely livid.

FREDDY (O.S.)
 You can't do this.

SEAMUS (O.S.)
 I can do whatever the hell I want.

Not far behind Wilder Seamus politely tries to weave his way
 out of the middle of the Audience.

A sea of phones record everything.

ON THE DROP CURTAIN

Seamus blocks Freddy into a corner.

SEAMUS
 You still want to be a principal,
 don't you?

Freddy shuts her eyes and tries to turn away.

Seamus roughly grabs her chin and forces her to look at him.

ON STAGE

Freddy closes her eyes and tries to block out everything as
 she dances.

SEAMUS (O.S.)
 (dangerously calm)
 I can make that extremely easy for
 you. Or I can make it impossible.
 As long as I still make director
 that choice is yours.

FREDDY (O.S.)
 Please, let me go.

Kyle places his hands on Freddy's hips as he lifts her.

The other Male Dancers follow suit with their partners.

SEAMUS (O.S.)
Claire will dance Victoria, and
you'll be her understudy.

FREDDY (O.S.)
Please--

Freddy opens her eyes and violently pulls away from Kyle.

The Female Dancers follow her lead.

ON THE DROP CURTAIN

Seamus shoves Freddy hard up against the wall and presses himself against her.

Freddy cries silently as his hands roam over her body.

She writhes under his grip as he kisses her neck.

SEAMUS
If you keep your mouth shut then I
might still let you keep it.

The video changes to a private with Claire and Seamus.

Thomas and Johnson watch Claire almost hungrily as Seamus lets his hands linger on her body.

It no longer feels innocent.

ANGRY MURMURS spread throughout the Audience.

FREDDY

Looks out at the Audience and sees SEVERAL MEN attempting to apprehend Seamus.

The Dancers around her slowly stop performing as they watch the altercation in the...

AUDIENCE

Celeste steps back into the theatre from the hall as she ends a call. Seamus spots her.

SEAMUS

Celeste, please explain to these men that this is all a misunderstanding.

Celeste holds up her USB, and Seamus finally looks afraid.

CELESTE

I suggest you get a really good lawyer.

(to the Men)

The police are on their way. Take him into the hall.

The MUSIC STOPS and Seamus looks back at the stage.

ON STAGE

Freddy is the only dancer still performing.

Each of her movements are sharp, angry, and powerful.

She watches as the Men drag Seamus out of the theatre.

The door SLAMS behind him with a finality.

Freddy keeps dancing.

YOUNG DANCER #1 (PRE-LAP)

Do you think it's really her?

INT. BALLET COMPANY - HALLWAY - DAY

Freddy's final performance plays on a phone.

A couple of YOUNG DANCERS huddle together in a crowded hallway as they watch the video.

They look through a hall window into the studio where Freddy, a number safety pinned to her leotard, performs a solo for a panel of JUDGES.

YOUNG DANCER #2

It can't be her. I heard she quit ballet after the trial.

YOUNG DANCER #1

You can't just quit ballet.

Freddy finishes, curtseys gracefully, and exits the studio.

The Young Dancers pull away from the window hurriedly.

Freddy pretends not to notice their gawking as she takes off her pointe shoes.

FEMALE DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Ms. Sparks.

Freddy sees the Female Director in the studio doorway.

A hush falls over the hallway, and the Young Dancers watch the exchange in awe.

FEMALE DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
Come back tomorrow with that
partner of yours. I want to see
what you two can do.

The Female Director goes back into the studio.

Freddy keeps her composure as she slips on her jacket, and grabs her bag.

FEMALE DIRECTOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Next!

The Young Dancers jump, and one of them rushes into the studio.

Freddy dials Kyle's number on her phone and waits with it at her ear as she weaves through the waiting Dancers.

Finally Kyle picks up.

KYLE (V.O.)
Freddy--

FREDDY
--Whatever plans you have tonight,
cancel them. We have an audition
tomorrow.

KYLE (O.S.)
Are you joking? Claire will--

Freddy finally reaches the front doors and she steps outside.

EXT. BALLET COMPANY - DAY

Freddy beams when she spots Wilder leaning against the stair railing.

FREDDY
--She'll understand. Just meet me
at Shiloh's in an hour.

Freddy hangs up and slips her hand into Wilder's casually as they walk down the street.

WILDER

Do you still have time to grab a coffee before you rush off to the studio?

FREDDY

Only if you're making it.

Wilder playfully pulls away, but Freddy grabs his hand and pulls him back to her.

They continue to playfully bicker as they walk hand in hand.

FADE OUT.

THE END