

22 INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY- DAY

22

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

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

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

BRENNAN

Yes, Nina?

NINA

Do you have a minute?

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

BRENNAN (O.S.)

Come in.

She takes a breath and then follows.

23 INT. BRENNAN'S OFFICE- DAY

23

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

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

NINA

If now's not a good time...

BRENNAN

Now's fine, what is it?

NINA

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

BRENNAN

How thrilling for you.

NINA

(thrown)
Well...

BRENNAN

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

NINA

Yes, but-

BRENNAN

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

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

NINA

(devastated)

I see.

BRENNAN

I know I said I'd feature you more-

NINA

What did I do wrong?

BRENNAN

(amused)

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

NINA

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

She makes a move towards the door.

BRENNAN

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

She looks back at him, uncertain.

Brennan nonchalantly stubs out his cigarette.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

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

She shakes her head.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

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

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

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Why did you come today? All dolled up?

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

NINA

I came to ask you to give me the part.

BRENNAN

Why should I give it to you?

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

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

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

NINA

I know.

BRENNAN

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

NINA

I can be the Black Swan too.

BRENNAN

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

NINA

I've never had the chance.

BRENNAN

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

NINA

Yes.

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

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

BRENNAN

Ow! Fuck!

He touches his lip, stunned.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

You bit me.

She's too scared to respond.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

(amused)

I can't believe it. That fucking hurt.

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

NINA

(mumbled)

Sorry.

She quickly leaves, shell-shocked.

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INT. LARGE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

24

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

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

VERONICA

(irked)

What?

Nina shakes her head.

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

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