

THE BLACK SWAN

Screenplay by
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INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Titles roll over a pair of women's feet dancing the final scene as the White Swan in SWAN LAKE.

The woman climbs, dancing, up the cliff on the stage and the camera rises to reveal that it is LISA ALBIN, a petite bright-eyed ballerina in her twenties. The cliff rises against a backdrop of shimmering stars.

She looks out at the audience then JUMPS OFF THE CLIFF. The audience APPLAUDS MADLY as we

CUT TO BLACK:

DARKNESS

Silence at first, then we hear the WINDING of a music box.

FADE IN:

CLOSE UP OF A MUSIC BOX

A tiny white BALLERINA spins to tinny music.

INT. SMALL SPARSE BEDROOM - MORNING

Lisa's eyes spring open. There is a smile on the otherwise grim, face that hovers over her. It is an old woman, and although they are not related, everyone calls her MOTHER.

MOTHER

Wake up. It's a brand new day!

INT. BATHROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Lisa looks at herself in the medicine cabinet mirror. The water is running in the shower and the room starts filling with steam. As she undresses, still glancing in the mirror, we lose sight of her.

INT. KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

Lisa is sitting at the table, legs crossed on the chair eating plain yogurt. There are three chairs and three settings-- someone obviously isn't there.

LISA

Someone's sleeping in...

MOTHER

She wasn't in her room. She must
have gone out early.

Lisa raises an eyebrow but Mother doesn't notice. She slices
a grapefruit in half and puts a cherry in the center.

MOTHER

You seem happy this morning...

LISA

I had the best dream. I was
dancing the White Swan...it was so
perfect....

Mother puts a plate with the grapefruit in front of Lisa.

MOTHER

You won't be in the corps forever,
sweetie. That will be you one day.

Lisa is pleased at the thought as she eats.

CUT TO:

EXT. METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE - MORNING

A MAN, his back to us, blows cigarette smoke at the poster
for SWAN LAKE in a free-standing frame. It shows a woman
being lifted, face hidden by shadows. The show stars
VERONICA FIELD. Moving back, we see the poster is one of a
row of ten free-standing posters, all identical.

Lisa hurries past the posters, bag over her shoulder,
unnoticed.

EXT. METROPOLITAN COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Lisa is walking briskly toward the garage entrance but slows
a little. In the distance, forty yards away in front of the
building, she notices YELLOW POLICE TAPE stretched over
orange CONES cordoning off a small area, about ten-by-ten
feet. A UNIFORMED cop is talking quietly to a jump-suited
LINCOLN CENTER CUSTODIAN.

Her curiosity will have to wait-- she's a little late. She
heads into the Garage tunnel.

INT. UNDERGROUND GARAGE/BACKSTAGE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The tunnel leads to the stage door. In front of the door is a DESK where a dull looking GUARD sits.

Lisa gives the Guard a pleasant smile, but he hardly seems to notice as he buzzes her into the building.

INT. METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lisa comes in and smiles at a DANCER, but notices it isn't returned. The mood immediately seems heavy.

Lisa winds her way through backstage passages, ropes, sandbags, scenery and old props. A stagehand, SIMON, tries to give her a smile.

SIMON
Holding up okay?

Lisa nods, confused by the question.

SIMON
If you need to talk....

She doesn't want to talk to him at all. Lisa ducks her head and turns down a corridor toward a dressing room.

INT. CORPS DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

It is a large room, shared by forty girls, most of them ranging in age from 18 to 25. Not all of them are there, some are on the floor stretching, some are changing.

There are only four make-up tables for all of them, but they're empty-- most of the girls won't put on make-up for rehearsal. One exception, Priscilla, a redhead, is working on her mascara.

Lisa enters and finds the mood in the room off. She puts down her bag. She bends to the mirror to put on a pony tale fastener.

LISA
What's going on?

PRISCILLA
You don't know?

Lisa shakes her head in dread. Priscilla doesn't seem overly upset, and she continues putting on her make-up as she speaks.

PRISCILLA
 Veronica killed herself after last
 night's performance.
 (beat as she checks
 makeup)
 She jumped off the roof.

Lisa is devastated. She stands thinking. She looks around, surprised to see so many of the young women, quiet but still going on about their business.

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

It is a large room, empty except for a piano tucked in the corner. Two of the opposing walls are mirrored. There is a barre all the way around the edge of the room, and free-standing barre's that can be moved out onto the floor when needed, which they are now.

Most of the Corps members are standing anxiously in the same area of the room, while the PRINCIPALS, including DIANA are over to one side.

The artistic director, ALEX, fifty-year-old ex-dancer, built like a bull, enters.

ALEX
 Everyone...I'm sure you've heard
 the tragic news...the good news is,
 we've decided to find a replacement
 and postpone the show instead of
 cancelling.

A buzz goes up through the room. Lisa takes a couple of steps toward Diana.

LISA
 It's going to be you, I know it...

And she isn't alone in this opinion. Diana, however, is so far above the corps members in stature, that she barely acknowledges Lisa.

ALEX
 Settle down...I also want to let
 you know, over the next few days
 some people are going to be asking
 questions about Veronica Field.
 (MORE)

ALEX(cont'd)

I expect your full cooperation so we can get this terrible episode behind us as quickly as possible.

CUT TO:

INT. BALLET OFFICE - DAY

A ruggedly attractive DETECTIVE in his thirties sits behind one of four desks, with a couple of uniformed officers moving in and out, sometimes whispering things to him, as he tells them things they should be doing. In contrast to the male dancers we may have seen, and from the way he eyes the female dancers, the detective isn't gay.

Lisa is brought in by a FEMALE COP who hands the detective a printed sheet. From the Detective's side, anyway, there is a bit of sexual energy in the air. Lisa is demure.

DETECTIVE

Lisa Albin...have a seat, I'm Lt. Ryan...This is very informal, just a few questions....

(looking at the paper)

What did you think of Veronica Field?

LISA

Everyone loved her. She was a great dancer.

DETECTIVE

I understand you shared an apartment with her?

LISA

There's a woman who has a place just two stops on the number one. She has a couple of bedrooms she rents out to dancers, she'll put an ad up on the board when someone leaves...

DETECTIVE

We'll check on it. So you and Veronica were close?

LISA

We'd have breakfast together most mornings. We'd see each other more here than at home.

DETECTIVE
You didn't socialize? Go to
restaurants? Clubs?

LISA
We would have, but there's no time.

DETECTIVE
You work *all* the time?

LISA
Probably twelve hours a day since I
was five years old...

He is a little overwhelmed by the number.

LISA
Even if there was time, she was a
principal. I'm a corps members.

He looks at her and shrugs.

LISA
It would be like you having dinner
with the police commissioner or the
mayor...

DETECTIVE
Doesn't really happen.

She nods.

DETECTIVE
Anyone she did see outside of work?

LISA
No...Um...I remember last year, one
of the stagehands followed her home
a couple of times, but they had a
talk with him...

DETECTIVE
Who would that be?

LISA
I don't want to get anyone in
trouble.

He waits, looking at her sympathetically.

DETECTIVE
He won't be in trouble. We're
talking to everyone...

LISA

Um...Simon...I'm not sure of his last name.

DETECTIVE

How would you describe Alex Kardova's relationship with Veronica?

LISA

(hesitating)

They respected each other.

DETECTIVE

I'm really going at this blind--I wish now I'd paid attention when my grandmother used to take us to the Nutcracker.

Lisa laughs a little, charmed by him.

DETECTIVE

Tell me about "Swan Lake?"
(off her puzzled look)
What part did Veronica play?

LISA

Veronica was Odette, the Queen of the White Swans. She and her friends were young women a sorcerer turned into swans, and the lake is made from their mother's tears. The only way for them to break the spell is for the Prince to profess his love to Odette.

DETECTIVE

And, of course, he does....

LISA

Actually, no. The Sorcerer turns his own daughter, Odile, into the Black Swan. She does a sensual dance, tricks the Prince into thinking she's Odette and he professes his love to her. When Odette finds out, she forgives the Prince then kills herself. Instead of marrying the Black Swan, the Prince kills himself, too. Their sacrifice for each other breaks the spell.

The Detective smirks at the story.

DETECTIVE
And people watch this?

LISA
(smiling)
For more than a hundred years.

DETECTIVE
Veronica was the White Swan, who
plays the Black Swan?

LISA
She played both parts... Odile and
Odette are like two sides of the
same coin.

DETECTIVE
What part do you play?

LISA
(shyly)
Oh....I'm not really important.

He smiles at her, attracted to her. She looks away,
embarrassed.

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

The Dancers are led through stretches and simple moves by
CHRISTINE, a fifty-year-old former prima ballerina, still in
fabulous shape. The Dancers are working hard and are covered
in sweats, leg-warmers, and sweaters.

Alex walks in and the whole attitude changes. He stops to
talk to Christine, and nearly everyone strips down to their
leotards and works harder trying to impress him.

And he scrutinizes the women like he's on a shopping trip.

He lingers near the principals, stopping in front of Diana
for awhile. She's good, but there's something very
mechanical about her, and Alex doesn't seem impressed.
Sensing a poor judgement, Diana looks frustrated.

The one person who looks relaxed is Lisa. She's working as
hard as she can, but it looks rather effortless.

The other dancers look at each other as Alex wanders over and
studies her movements. She's perfect as he watches, and goes
behind her, whispering into her ear.

ALEX
(whispering)
I'd like to see you in my office.

He walks on, glancing at the other dancers on the way to the door, but by whispering to Lisa, a wave of jealousy has washed over the room.

The dancers take a breath. Lisa gathers her things into her bags, and the others watch in awe. Diana is especially jealous, and her eyes shoot daggers.

Priscilla edges over, wiping sweat off her face.

PRISCILLA
(whispering)
What was that?

LISA
Nothing...he wants to talk to me...

Priscilla doesn't seem as jealous as the others and is amazed. Her attitude makes Lisa nervous. Lisa gathers her things and leaves the room.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - A LITTLE LATER

The camera moves over forty years of Alex's ballet memorabilia, including pictures of some the dance world's biggest stars.

Alex has his chair rolled out around the desk, so he's sitting nearly knee to knee with Lisa.

ALEX
I just wanted to tell you...I've been impressed with your work lately.

LISA
(embarrassed)
I have a long way to go...

ALEX
It's never a good idea to contradict the artistic director, is it?

She laughs a little, but is uncomfortable.

He slides his hand onto her knee. She's flattered but confused. She looks away-- perhaps she's thinking this is a great opportunity, even though this is the last thing she wants. She looks at the wall at the photos of the great dancers.

After a minor hesitation, he slips his hand higher up her thigh, getting bolder.

It's too much too soon for Lisa. Wanting out, but desperately trying not to seem like she's repulsed, she lifts his hand gently, gives it a squeeze and slips out of the chair. She releases his hand and makes her way to the door. He's frustrated, but she's extricated herself so smoothly, he can't say anything.

LISA

If it's all right, I ought to get
back to work...

He watches with slight irritation as she leaves.

EXT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

A mass of mostly young, attractive MOURNERS are filing into the church; others are watching from behind barriers stretched all the way down the block. There is a light rain and it is like a sea of umbrellas.

The one person who doesn't have an umbrella is Lisa. Rain runs down her sad face. She carries a single rose. Lisa hears the voices of WOMEN MOURNERS from beneath scattered umbrellas:

MOURNER #1 (O.S.)

Why now?...It was the performance
of a lifetime...

MOURNER #2 (O.S.)

No one's ever danced Odette that
beautifully....

MOURNER #3 (O.S.)

She was so young....

MOURNER #1

I just don't understand...

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

A Gothic, shadow-filled place. An OTHER-WORLDLY CHOIR SINGS in the balcony, as MOURNERS file through in a huge line which stretches out the door.

A few mourners behind Lisa, Priscilla is engaged in whispering GOSSIP with a FRIEND, and even suppresses a giggle. Several mourners behind them, Diana is checking her make-up in a compact.

The closed coffin, in front of the altar, is literally covered in bouquets which are also piled high around the steps behind the casket. There are dozens of eight-year-old ballerinas constantly tossing rose petals on the ground in front of the coffin as the mourners pass.

Lisa steps to the coffin, looking a little bedraggled from the rain. Seeing the coffin, she starts to lose it, and the more she tries to fight it, the more the tears come.

Diana watches Lisa, wondering if it's an act.

Lisa puts the rose on the coffin then drops to her knees sobbing.

Priscilla and two other girls rush forward to help her up.

LISA

She hears something and stops crying, tipping her head toward the coffin.

PRISCILLA

It's okay, sweetie...it's okay...

LISA

(whispering)

Do you hear that?

The other girls listen but don't hear anything. They help Lisa to her feet, and as they move on we start to hear a sound: A MUSIC BOX IS BEING WOUND.

CLOSE UP OF A MUSIC BOX

It is not in the cathedral, but we hear the mechanism being WOUND. It is a little different than the previous box we saw, and is placed next to it.

The first ballerina is still dancing on the first box. A second BALLERINA starts to spin on the second box.

INT. LARGE BEDROOM - NIGHT

It is dark until the light clicks on. The bedroom is larger than Lisa's and full of clothes and personal items.

Lisa enters looking around. She runs her hand over the bed and the pillow. She looks mournful.

She goes to the closet and looks at the clothes. She pulls a BLACK DRESS toward her and inhales deeply.

MOTHER (O.S.)

What are you doing in Veronica's room?

Lisa is startled and turns to see Mother standing in the doorway. Lisa tucks the dress back into the closet.

LISA

I just can't believe she's gone.

MOTHER

You know...Veronica used to talk about you a lot.

LISA

Really?

MOTHER

She didn't think much of the other girls...but she thought you were going to be something special someday...all you needed was a chance. She loved you.

Lisa is upset and confused. She looks into a mirror attached to the top of the bureau.

IN THE MIRROR

Mother comes up behind Lisa and puts a hand on her shoulder.

MOTHER

(quietly)

This is your chance...

Lisa is slightly alarmed.

LISA

It's too...I can't even think about it.

MOTHER

(softly)

I know you're sad...I'm sad too...but you know what Veronica would want...

Lisa looks at her own reflection and we move in on her eyes as Mother speaks softly into her ear, almost seductively.

MOTHER (O.C.)

You know she wanted it for you...she wanted you to have your chance...

We're tight on Lisa's eyes as she closes them and tips her head back.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. SMALLER REHEARSAL ROOM - NIGHT

Lisa's head is tipped back, eyes closed. She moves into a spin.

Only the light over the piano is on, and what light come in from the door to the hall. Lisa, alone, dances the moves of the White Swan, from the second act of SWAN LAKE. There is no music, it's all in her head.

She's lost in it-- her face is flooded with ecstasy as every move is fluid and perfect.

She goes into a leap, and as she lands she sees a SILHOUETTE in the doorway. She stops and is instantly self-conscious. She picks up her towel and holds it to her chest.

LISA

Sorry...I didn't think anyone was here.

He steps into the light. It's Alex, and he seems intrigued.

ALEX

How do you know "Swan Lake" so well?

LISA

I love it. It was the first ballet my mother took me to when I was a girl..it was the first role I ever wanted to dance-- it's why I bugged her to let me take lessons. I did pieces from it at every recital I had from the time I was five.

She laughs a little. He steps closer.

ALEX

Beautiful...so lyrical...One suggestion, on the arabesque, it's important that you maintain this line on your waist...

He puts a hand on her back, lifts her arm and leans her back gently into position. In the dark room at night, it's more sexual than it would be at a real rehearsal. She looks into his eyes.

ALEX

You were turned...nice smooth line....Feel the difference there?

LISA

Yes...

She slowly comes up out of the move into a pirouette.

ALEX

Then the pirouette *flows* out of it...nice...

LISA

Thanks, Alex...
(toweling off)
It's late, I better get going.
(laughing)
I have ribbons to sew on shoes.

He smiles at her and nods slightly. She smiles her appreciation, and skips out of the room.

EXT. METROPOLITAN COURTYARD - NIGHT

It is empty and creepy as Lisa crosses from the exit. In the distance, the cones on the spot where Veronica jumped are being taken away, and the bouquets left on the spot are being thrown in trash barrels by the CUSTODIANS, who are not at all reverential in their work.

Finding it harsh and disheartening, Lisa can barely stand to glance over at the spot, before she lowers her head and walks toward the subway.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - TRAVELLING - NIGHT

Lisa is next to the window, looking tired and distracted. She rides along in peace for several moments.

An express train rises on an upgrade until it runs alongside the local Lisa is on.

The trains jockey back and forth, inches from each other on parallel tracks. There are several people on the train next to Lisa's, one is a WOMAN who could pass for Lisa's DOUBLE. She's in profile, and doesn't notice Lisa.

LISA'S REFLECTION

Lisa looks at her reflection in the glass. Her double's face moves into the same space on a different plane, beyond the window in the other car.

Lisa sees the double. The double suddenly stares at her and her lips curl into a smile. Lisa is startled, but before she can be sure about what she's seeing: BLACKNESS as the trains separate in a tunnel.

OVER LISA'S SHOULDER

Lisa turns looking out the window eagerly, waiting for the trains to reconnect. When the other train comes back into view, Lisa doesn't see anyone who looks like her. The trains jockey, then the express zips away. Lisa settles back, sure she's imagined the whole thing, she shrugs it off.

EXT. LISA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The DOORMAN opens the door and gives Lisa a respectful nod.

INT. SHOWER - NIGHT

Lisa is taking a shower, and the room is filled with steam. She sees a BLACK SILHOUETTE move slightly on the other side of the opaque curtain.

She opens the curtain and sees it is her own robe moving on a hook in the breeze from the open window.

She turns slightly and eyes her reflection in the bathroom mirror. She smiles, feeling a little ridiculous.

INT. HALLWAY - A LITTLE LATER

Lisa leaves the bathroom in her robe, freshly showered and runs into Mother.

MOTHER

The mail's on the table...oh, and it's the first of the month...

LISA

Oh, sorry, with all that's happened...I'll take care of it.

LIVING ROOM

Lisa steps to the table and goes through a small stack of bills and junk mail, and is surprised to find a beaten up BUBBLE PACK MAILER addressed to her. She tears the end and slides out a long white cardboard box.

She opens the box and looks, in disbelief, at the contents. Inside is A LARGE KITCHEN KNIFE.

There's nothing else in the package. She looks at the envelope-- her name and address are neatly written out, but there's no return address. She puts the knife in the box, the box in the mailer and drops it into the kitchen trash.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL SPARSE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lisa is trying to sleep but is wide awake. She sighs and gets up. She takes her alarm clock with her.

INT. LARGE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lisa enters and doesn't turn out the lights. The room is much cosier. She puts her clock on the night stand then climbs into bed. The bed is much more comfortable, and in just a few moments, she is asleep.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Sun blasts through the windows. Lisa, already dressed, with her bag over her shoulder stops at Mother's door.

She takes out an envelope with cash in it and counts it. She's ready to knock but she hears the TINNY MUSIC BOX MUSIC and Mother humming along with it.

Slightly weirded out, she closes the envelope and slips it under the door.

INT. STAGE - MORNING

Most of the company is sitting around, though some are stretching. Diana is especially happy this morning, and she whispers knowingly to the other principals, of which we only catch a snippet:

DIANA

He's announcing it this morning.

Lisa enters, passing Diana's smug clique and joins Priscilla who is sitting cross-legged.

Alex enters whispering to Christine who is consulting a clipboard, nodding.

PRISCILLA

(whispering to Lisa)

Give me five minutes alone with him, I swear...

Lisa cracks a smile but gets rid of it as Alex steps up in front of the room.

ALEX

Everyone...we have a few things to cover. Since we have decided on a replacement, we have decided to dedicate the production of "Swan Lake" to Veronica Field.

The dancers applaud. Everyone is pleased and whispering. Diana is ready to be named successor...

ALEX

The dancer I've chosen for the lead has been working very hard. And I'm going to work hard to make things easy for her. Lisa Albin.

LISA

Her jaw drops. In a moment she is swamped by deliriously happy corps members.

PRISCILLA

Oh my God, I can't believe it!

Priscilla hugs her. Other girls do too, but from the nearby clique of Principals, there is seething resentment.

Diana comes over and offers her hand.

DIANA

(quietly)

I guess we know who you're fucking.

Lisa is appalled, but Dianna hugs her.

DIANA

That was quite a performance you put on at the funeral, by the way.

DORIS, the matronly wardrobe woman, comes over to her with a tutu. Lisa is surprised as Doris helps her put it on.

DORIS

It's just the practice tutu. You have to have it on so you stand out from all the other girls...

Lisa takes the grey tutu. NONE OF THE OTHER dancers wears a tutu for rehearsal, and it means a lot-- it's like a coronation.

LISA

(whispering)

Thanks....

Doris deftly fastens the hooks and Lisa steps back from her.

DORIS

Now you're a princess...

She takes a turn and Doris looks at her with pride. She is different now from the other dancers and we can see a new confidence in her. She looks up at Alex and smiles.

INT. CORPS DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Lisa and the other girls come in, and rush for the mirrors.

PRISCILLA

I can't believe it...I'm so happy for you...

There is ad lib gushing and Lisa reacts with great humility. Doris appears at the door.

DORIS
Sweetie...you're not in the corps
anymore....come with me....

We can see the hard feelings on the corps faces as soon as Lisa passes them. To Lisa's dismay, even Priscilla starts WHISPERING about her with another girl.

INT. PRINCIPLE DRESSING ROOM - DAY

The light is flicked on. The room isn't gigantic, but compared to where we just were it's vast. There are two couches, two dressing mirrors, a private bathroom, two closets, a piano and space in the middle of the room.

Lisa almost seems ashamed as she's led in by Doris, who carries Lisa's bag.

LISA
How many people am I sharing this
with?

DORIS
Nobody right now...it's all yours.

Lisa is amazed at the room. There is a light knock on the open door. Lisa looks in the mirror as Alex comes into the room, staring at Lisa.

DORIS
We'll fit you for your costumes
later on...you're just about
Veronica's size...

Doris leaves. Lisa is alone with Alex and he draws closer.

ALEX
Congratulations...

Alex goes to kiss her, but she turns her cheek to his lips. He is irked as she steps away.

Lisa looks away, embarrassed.

LISA
I appreciate this chance so much,
Alex....I'll always be grateful.

He waits a beat, wondering if now she'll come to his arms, but she remains frozen.

ALEX

The role of the White Swan is very innocent, I'm sure you'll have no trouble mastering it. I just hope you're up to the Black Swan-- her attitude is overtly sexual and her dances are more technically demanding. There's not much time for you to learn both...

LISA

I'm always up for hard work...

He stares at her and sees he's not getting anywhere personally with her.

ALEX

Let's hope so....I guarantee, it'll be a challenge...

He leaves the room and Lisa is relieved.

INT. STAGE - REHEARSAL - DAY

Lisa is put through her paces by Alex who keeps STOPPING everyone to correct her. It's very frustrating for the corps and a little embarrassing for Lisa.

ALEX

Stop...lower your head as you go on pointe....

He nods and the piano player continues the music.

ALEX

Stop...fluid but controlled on the arm movements, Lisa, you're not waving spaghetti.

He nods and the piano player continues the music.

ALEX

Stop...if you don't land the jump properly, the other swans aren't going to be able to cross....

They go further back. Lisa keeps working, doesn't indulge in bitterness or complaint. Alex follows her as the dancer playing THE PRINCE lifts her and does a carry.

ALEX

The fate of your fellow swans is in your hands. If you can't make the Prince fall in love with you, the spell will never be broken...

From the POV of the carry, Lisa sees Simon, backstage, being led out in handcuffs by the Detective and two UNIFORMED COPS. Alex keeps talking, but Lisa doesn't look like she's listening.

ALEX

It doesn't matter whether or not you even want the Prince-- this is a sacrifice you have to make...

INT. MET COSTUME ROOM - DAY

Doris helps Lisa on with the costume, checking seams and the fit across the stomach and backside. She does the hooks along the side.

The white feathers shimmer and Lisa admires them in the three way mirror.

DORIS

Nice....good....that looks good...
(beat as she works)
You hear they arrested Simon Watson?

LISA

Why?

DORIS

Turns out he had pictures of Veronica in his locker downstairs...they think he killed her.

Lisa is very confused.

LISA

No...but...I thought she jumped off the roof?

DORIS

You didn't hear? She was stabbed before she fell.

Lisa is jolted by the news.

DORIS

They're searching his apartment for
the knife right now....

(standing back, admiring
the costume)

It fits you like it was made for
you, sweetie.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Lisa hurries to the subway entrance, but hesitates. The hole
looks dark and foreboding. She hurries away.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Lisa walks briskly along a deserted path, dim cast-iron
lampposts light her way. The leaves rustle and there are
creepy sounds from the shadowy woods.

A lamppost flickers and goes out as she goes over a
footbridge. Lisa stops, and when she does, she hears
FOOTSTEPS behind her that also stop.

She remains still for a moment. She can hear breathing and
turns quickly, but sees nothing but shadows. She hurries
along the path.

UNDER AN OVERPASS

Lisa rushes into nearly complete darkness. There are echoes
all around her-- she's sure she can hear the footsteps. She
takes off in a half run, looking over her shoulder but sees
nothing.

LISA

Is nearly in a panic as she emerges from beneath the
footbridge and, on the more brightly lit bridle path, she's
almost HIT BY A HORSE AND CARRIAGE.

She backs up just in time to avoid being hit. When she looks
up, she can't believe what she sees.

LISA'S P.O.V.

Smiling in the back of the carriage with a blanket across her lap and her hands inside a fur muff is a woman who looks exactly like her. She is dressed differently, carries herself differently, but otherwise is Lisa's DOUBLE.

The Double glances right at Lisa just before the back of the carriage passes out of view.

LISA

She takes a few steps toward the carriage, but it is quickly away! She stands, confused, looking around. She sees a COP by the exit to the park and is relieved. She hurries to the exit.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lisa rushes into the apartment, tossing down her coat and goes straight to the kitchen. Mother is at the stove cooking, and looks on in wonder as Lisa pulls the trash can from under the sink and dumps it on the floor. There's nothing in it but paper towels, a filter and coffee grounds.

LISA

Where's the trash from this morning?

MOTHER

I put it in the chute.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Lisa hurries out, leaving the door open. She stops at a garbage chute and looks inside. She goes to the elevator and rings for it.

Mother comes to the door, concerned.

MOTHER

What's the matter?

The elevator opens and Lisa gets in before she can give an explanation.

INT. BUILDING BASEMENT TRASH SORTING AREA - NIGHT

A large, creepy sub-basement in a large, old building. There are twists and turns and patches of darkness everywhere. The boiler is loud and active.

We hear loud rustling and move around pillars as if we're sneaking up on someone. We finally see Lisa tearing open black bags of trash-- the stuff that comes down the chute is sorted and bagged by a Super.

Lisa pulls open a bag and is relieved to see the padded envelope addressed to her.

She stands and pulls the box out of the envelope. She opens the box, but it's empty!

Lisa stands there, perplexed and dismayed. She lets the empty box drop on the heap.

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

Lisa is at the front of the room with Christine, as the piano player plays and Lisa goes through complex and strenuous movements, always remaining a perfect picture of grace.

She ignores the other girls including Diana, doing the same motions behind her, eyes always on her, waiting for her to fuck up.

INT. STAGE - DAY

The third act is being rehearsed. There are no costumes, and Lisa has on the practice tutu. She dances madly around the Prince trying to seduce him as the piano player plays.

ALEX

You missed a turn...arch...come on,
Lisa...

He watches more and is frustrated, it's obvious that Lisa isn't doing well.

ALEX

You're seducing him, Lisa, draw him
in....you're too stiff... come on!

Lisa goes into a wild spin that brings her behind the Prince and her hands snake over him. As she starts her next spin, she sees, in the otherwise empty audience, her Double!

Lisa spins, and catches sight of the Double again.

One more spin and Lisa collapses in a faint.

CUT TO BLACK.

DARKNESS

Silence, then voices and whispers are heard.

TRAINER (O.C.)
Lisa....are you okay?....

INT. THE STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Lisa's eyes flutter open. The TRAINER, a short gay man in his forties is crouched over her. Alex is next to him, looking concerned-- perhaps a touch guilty for driving her so hard. Christine is there, and a few of the girls.

Some coats and bags have been put behind her head.

We hear footsteps, then the double, BETH CIARRA, comes into view, looking very concerned.

BETH
Is she all right?

Lisa looks at Beth and her eyes widen as if she's imagining her.

LISA
What happened?

TRAINER
You fainted....did you eat today?

Lisa nods and sits up, her eyes are locked on Beth.

ALEX
Lisa, this is Beth Ciarra. She was with a company in San Francisco, she's taking your place in the corps. She just got in, all the way by bus...

BETH
(smiling)
I hate flying.

ALEX
If you're okay, I'd like to show
Beth around...

TRAINER
She'll be fine...here, take a
sip...

The trainer gives Lisa some water. Alex walks off with Beth,
his arm around her waist.

Priscilla comes over. Lisa looks a little panicked.

LISA
What's going on?

TRAINER
You just got light headed--

LISA
Not that-- her.

PRISCILLA
(whispering)
What about her?

LISA
She looks like me. What is she
doing here-- she looks just like
me!

The Trainer cranes his neck to see Beth who is far off now
with Alex. He obviously doesn't think so.

LISA
Doesn't she?

PRISCILLA
You know Alex...he has his type.

The other dancers look at Lisa like she's a little nuts.
Lisa notices and bows to the pressure, calming herself down.

LISA
You don't think she sort of looks
like me? Seriously...

TRAINER
(shrugging)
I guess I could see it...

She gets to her feet and he lends a hand to help her.

INT. PRINCIPAL DRESSING ROOM - LATER

Lisa sits at her dressing table, brushing her hair, as several mirrors reflect her image at once. She eats some rice cakes.

A light knock and Alex enters.

ALEX
How are you feeling?

LISA
Better. I started early, I didn't get a chance to eat. I'm ready to go back out.

ALEX
The next couple of weeks are going to be hell. You've got to take care of yourself, make sure you eat, get plenty of rest...

LISA
I appreciate your concern, but don't worry. It won't happen again.

ALEX
Let's hope not. The whole production hinges on you now. You're not in the corps anymore.

She gets up, grabs her practice tutu and heads out of the dressing room.

EXT. METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

The Plaza area is nearly empty as Lisa walks out. She sees Beth ahead, looking at the row of signs, then walking off. Lisa follows.

EXT. LINCOLN CENTER - CONTINUOUS

A SIGN-PASTER is altering the row of stand alone posters. Swan Lake with the image of the silhouetted ballerina remains. Only a strip reading "LISA ALBIN" is pasted over the name "VERONICA FIELD."

Beyond the sign Lisa sees Beth heading down into the Subway.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - CONTINUOUS

Lisa hurries down the stairs. Her footsteps are the only sound. There is no token booth, only the high aluminum-barred turnstiles. Lisa can hear footsteps receding down what looks like an empty platform.

Lisa searches for her Metrocard. First there is a rush of wind, and it sends scraps of paper and debris swirling around Lisa's feet. Lisa knows what this means, and she becomes more frantic, finally finding her card as we hear the ROAR of the TRAIN pulling in the station.

THE CARD READER

Flashes "try again." We hear Lisa rattle the bars, but they don't move. She swipes again: "Try again at this turnstile."

LISA

Looks frustrated as she rattles the bars to no avail. The train has pulled into the station and is a few feet in front of her as the doors BING and open.

In a rounded security mirror, Lisa sees Beth nonchalantly enter a car at the front of the train.

THE CARD READER

Lisa's hand is frantically jamming the card. Finally it lights "FARE PAID."

LISA

Pushes through the turnstile, runs for the train and slips through the door just as it's closing!

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - TRAVELLING - CONTINUOUS

The train lurches forward and Lisa finds herself in a completely empty car. She moves forward toward the front of the car as the lights flicker on and off.

Lisa reaches the door and tries it, but it's locked.

INT. ANOTHER SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

Lisa comes to the door of the car and looks up the platform. She sees Beth get off the train, and Lisa steps off herself.

Beth, several cars ahead is quickly out the exit. Lisa has to hurry up the platform as the train lurches forward and pulls out of the station with a SQUEAL.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Lisa comes up out of the subway entrance and the street looks deserted. She spots Beth, just as she's turning a corner.

EXT. AROUND THE CORNER - MOMENTS LATER

Lisa comes around and stops, startled. She catches her breath, trying to sort things out in her head-- she's right in front of HER OWN APARTMENT BUILDING!

Stunned she hurries inside.

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - NIGHT

Lisa reaches the elevator door just as it closes. Someone's in the elevator, but Lisa can't quite see who it is in the distorted mirrored tiles inside the car.

The Doorman is reading the newspaper at his desk.

LISA

Did a woman who looks like me just
go past?

He looks puzzled. Frustrated, she runs to the stairs.

INT. STAIRWELL - A LITTLE LATER

Lisa is getting a workout as she runs up the empty stairway, floor after floor, her heels echoing loudly.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF LISA'S APARTMENT

Beth steps off the elevator, walking past the incinerator chute toward Lisa's door.

Suddenly the stairwell door opens, and Lisa cuts Beth off before she reaches the door, startling her.

BETH
(laughing)
Oh...hi. You scared me. Lisa,
right?

LISA
What are you doing here?

Beth can sense the coldness from Lisa and becomes nervous.

BETH
I saw a posting about a room for
rent...

LISA
There wasn't a posting, no one put
up a posting.

Beth searches her pockets and bag.

BETH
No, I tore off a slip, I...

LISA
There's nothing available.

Lisa walks into the living room. She stops when she sees a large MIRROR is missing from the wall-- a large rectangular dust outline in its place.

Beth waits for a moment, then shakes her head, turns and heads for the elevator.

Lisa lets herself in with her keys and shuts the door on her. We hear the lock being thrown from within.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The place is dark. Lisa leans against the door, catching her breath. She listens at the door until she hears the elevator open and close.

KITCHEN

Lisa turns on the light. A prepared meal of stew and carrots is covered in plastic, out on the table.

Lisa takes off the plastic, but hesitates. The meal looks very unappetizing. She scrapes it into the trash.

LIVING ROOM

Lisa walks out, but when she gets to the hall, she stops. The light is on in Veronica's room.

Lisa approaches cautiously.

INT. LARGE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mother is unpacking Lisa's clothes.

LISA
What's going on?

MOTHER
Since you're sleeping in here now,
I thought I'd move your things in
here.

Mother holds up a skimpy black cocktail dress.

LISA
I hate those things...they're so
awful.

MOTHER
You can take Veronica's clothes if
you want them.

Lisa is a little uncomfortable. Mother holds up the skimpy dress.

MOTHER
What should I do with this?

LISA
Throw it away.

Mother thinks about it, then starts packing Lisa's old clothes into two small suitcases. Lisa goes to the closet and touches Veronica's dress that she admired earlier.

Lisa heads for the door.

MOTHER
Oh, by the way, I called the ballet
and asked them to post a room for
rent.

Lisa hesitates for a moment, then turns.

MOTHER

If you know anyone, I'm really
scraping by this month without
Veronica's rent...

Lisa feels guilty, but tries to hide it.

Mother zips up the suitcases and walks out of the room,
smiling at Lisa.

MOTHER

I'll be right back.

Lisa sighs and heads into her old room.

INT. SMALL SPARSE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lisa walks in. All her stuff is gone. She checks the closet--
it's completely empty. We hear the front door open and
close in the distance.

Lisa is about to shut off the light and leave, when she sees
a pile of mail on the otherwise empty dresser. She steps
closer, her alarm growing.

ON TOP OF THE PILE is the bubble wrap package. It's been
stapled shut, and looks beaten up, but otherwise the same.

Lisa steps out into the hall, unsure if it's a joke.

LISA

Mother?

She looks down the hall-- it's completely dark and creepy.
She ducks back into the room and goes to the package. She
lifts it and is upset-- there is some weight to it.

She tears it open, pulls out the long narrow box and shakes
it-- there's something inside.

She opens the box top. There is the knife!

LISA'S EYES

Widen in confusion.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Lisa is running through a maze of scaffolding at a construction site. Pulling back we see she is clutching the package.

There are no people or cars in sight. Lisa finds a dumpster filled with building debris. She FLINGS the knife in the box out into the middle of the dumpster.

She watches the box bounce, open, and hears the knife RATTLE as it falls deep into the tangle of debris.

She looks at her address on the envelope, then carries it off.

A CITY TRASH CAN - A LITTLE LATER

A newspaper is lifted out, the bubble wrap envelope is SHOVED deep down, then the newspaper is shoved in on top of it.

We see Lisa glance around as she walks away from the trash can.

INT. SMALLER REHEARSAL ROOM

Lisa is working with Alex, alone. The doors are open, and across the hall in the larger room, double doors are opening, revealing Christine in the middle of a large class with the soloists and some corps members.

Lisa is dancing well, but a piece seems to be missing.

ALEX

You've got the moves, but I'm not feeling the Black Swan...

He watches more.

ALEX

You're a liar...an imposter who's full of lust and comfortable with your body...

He watches more, getting close to her and circling her as she continues to dance.

ALEX

You'll do anything you want to get what you want....make me feel that!

She tries to be more seductive in her hand movements, but he is getting frustrated with her.

ALEX
Okay, stop...stop...

LISA
I feel like I'm getting it...

ALEX
(distracted)
Yeah. It's better.

In the other room, Alex notices Beth go into a sultry spin.

ALEX
I'm going to send Christine into
work with you on the footwork...
(beat)
That will come. But there's
another part of you that I think
you're going to have to get in
touch with if you're going to dance
this part...

He crosses the hall. We see him stop and talk to Beth, distracted as they both watch Beth dance. There's something extremely fluid about the way Beth is moving.

Lisa is taken with it and tries to imitate a hand motion as Beth does it across the hall. Lisa is attracted, but simultaneously feels threatened.

Alex goes in and gives Beth a note, Beth laughs congenially and tries it again Alex's way-- perfect! He claps encouragement.

Lisa dries off with a towel as Christine walks over.

CHRISTINE
Alex says to start on number
nineteen...

Lisa tosses the towel aside. Christine shuts the door to avoid the distraction of Alex gushing over Beth.

INT. STAGE - DAY

They are running through the second act, and Lisa, in her practice tutu, is perfect. Dancers not in the second act, such as Beth, sit on the floor downstage watching-- and they all seem very impressed.

Even Alex, who wanders around the performance has to nod in approval at the work Lisa is doing.

And then, potential tragedy:

On a carry, the Prince stumbles and drops Lisa! She falls hard!

The Piano Player stops abruptly and a collective gasp goes up from the entire company! Christine is very upset. Someone rushes off and comes back with the trainer.

Lisa rolls over and clutches her knee! The Prince leans over her.

THE PRINCE

I don't know what happened...I just slipped...

Lisa nods her head that she doesn't blame him, and he backs away.

Lisa looks at Beth-- she has a look of concern, more so than the other girls, and Lisa doesn't buy it.

BETH

Just stay there...don't try to get up...

Every accident is an opportunity, and Diana especially watches with anticipation. There is almost disappointment from several of the girls as Lisa gets up.

LISA

I'm okay...

Lisa hops around in place and does a turn. The Trainer is ready to tend to her, but Lisa waves him back.

LISA

I'm fine.

There is a pause, as Lisa walks around and catches her breath, forcing a smile for everyone to see.

ALEX

Okay...let's try it from the lift...

They go back into it, but as Lisa dances she hides the fact, through gritted teeth, that the knee hurts.

INT. TRAINER ROOM - DAY

The Trainer is icing Lisa's knee and feeling it carefully.

TRAINER

I think you're really lucky.

LISA

I don't feel lucky.

TRAINER

It could have been a whole lot worse... things like that have ended more than one career, even since I've been here.

LISA

I guess things like that happened.

TRAINER

(kidding)

You didn't piss off Brad, did you?

LISA

Of course not.

TRAINER

Kidding...I'd stay off of it for a day or two...

Lisa takes off the ice bag and stands on it. She shrugs at Trainer-- there's no way she can stay off of it.

INT. BACKSTAGE - LATER

Lisa is walking toward the stage. Priscilla sees her.

PRISCILLA

God-- you're walking?

LISA

I'm fine....

Lisa passes her and as she reaches the edge of the stage, she stops. Ahead of her, nearly behind some scenery, Beth and the Prince are having a very private conversation. Beth is a person who does a lot of touching while she talks, so it seems even more intimate.

Alex calls Beth aside and begins explaining a ballet move to her. Lisa takes the opportunity to stalk over to Brad, the Prince.

LISA
(accusatorially)
What were you and Beth talking
about?

THE PRINCE
What do you care?

LISA
Were you talking about me?

He's frustrated but guilty and defensive.

THE PRINCE
If you really want to know, she was
ripping me a new one for dropping
you...I feel bad enough without
your friends giving me shit...

He walks off in a snit. Lisa glances over at Beth who practices a turn-- it's a move not really satisfying Alex and he shakes his head.

Lisa exhales guiltily.

INT. CORPS DRESSING ROOM - LATER

The girls are laughing and gossiping as they change, but the mood sours when they realize Lisa is standing in the doorway. She's no longer one of them.

LISA
Beth?

Beth looks up, the only one pleased to see Lisa. Lisa nods for her to come out of the room.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Beth walks out to Lisa, wide-eyed.

LISA
I just wanted to apologize for last
night-- it turns out there was a
posting, the room was for rent.

BETH

Oh.

LISA

Sorry I was so rude...

BETH

It didn't bother me. Really.

Lisa still looks guilty.

BETH

Take me out to dinner, and we'll call it even.

Lisa is surprised.

BETH

Seriously, I'm new in town, I don't know where anything is, I could really use a friend...

Lisa smiles.

LISA

Okay. Sure.

Beth smiles and heads back into the dressing room. Lisa thinks a moment, then walks away, happy.

INT. LARGE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lisa is checking her appearance in the mirror, not satisfied. She goes to the closet and touches Veronica's dress she'd admired. She takes it out and holds it against herself.

The neckline is daring, but it is very nice. She decides to go for it-- she starts to change into the dress.

EXT. ELEGANT RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Lisa is waiting, and getting upset. From the way she keeps looking at a clock through the restaurant window, it's obvious Lisa has been waiting awhile. Lisa is uncomfortable as THREE PASSING STOCK-BROKER-TYPE MEN whisper lasciviously amongst themselves about her. She holds her coat closed and pretends not to notice them.

Lisa is just leaving when a cab pulls up--It's Beth. Beth is in no hurry to get out either, she flirts mercilessly with the CABBIE as she pays, and he's laughing and eyeing her.

Lisa is a little uncomfortable. And when Beth finally steps out of the cab, her coat is open. The dress she's wearing looks conspicuously like the dress Lisa had mother throw away!

Beth gets out and hugs Lisa, giving her a kiss on the cheek. Again Lisa is off guard, and she doesn't quite know how to touch her back.

BETH

Oh, my God, I lost track of the time! I hope you haven't been waiting here long? You should have just left..

LISA

No. I just got here myself.
(nodding to the
restaurant)
You'll like this place, it's nice.

BETH

It seems a little stuffy-- Let's go to that Chinese place?

Lisa looks over and sees a Chinese place that has a bit of a hole-in-the-wall feel about it. The windows are steamed up, and there is yelling in Chinese inside. The customers look much shabbier.

LISA

You sure? The fish in Jerome's is really nice--

BETH

Dim sum! We'll pig out! It'll be fun...

Beth hurries toward the Chinese place.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT (LATER)

It is a simple place, with very basic tables and chairs, no table cloths, paper napkins, but plenty of food and activity. It's loud and there are a number of tables with one or two GUYS who keep eyeing the dancers.

Beth has so much food from the Dim Sum menu and is trying everything. It makes the stream of Chinese WAIT PEOPLE like her and bring her extra things, just to see her enjoy them.

Lisa pushes things away, and eats something that looks like it's just rice with bean sprouts.

BETH
You've never tried this?

LISA
It's fried.

BETH
(tsking)
Open...open...

Beth holds out a fried dumpling with chopstick. Lisa laughs and turns her head, but Beth keeps the dumpling in front of her until Lisa takes a bite.

BETH
You can't have a little princess
bite, take the whole thing....

Lisa finally opens wider and Beth manages to get it in. Lisa likes the way it tastes, but her mouth is very full.

BETH
I can't believe you don't eat here
all the time-- this is great.
(leaning in whispering)
And you want to know the best thing
about Chinese Restaurants? Look
around.

Lisa does.

BETH
There are always single guys in
Chinese places. Straight guys,
too, and in San Francisco, that can
be a search, let me tell you.

Beth stuffs her mouth with a variety of things, washing them down with glass after glass of cheap wine from a carafe.

LISA
What made you come to New York?

BETH
As soon as I heard about Veronica
Field, I was packed and on a bus.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Beth pushes clothes into her suitcase.

She ZIPS it shut.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. GREYHOUND - TRAVELLING - DAY

Beth is pressed against the window, excited about the scenery and the adventure. A SLEAZY man moves along the aisle, and Beth gives him an encouraging look. The man sits next to her.

BETH (V.O.)

San Francisco was great, but I was
going to be stuck in the corps
forever....

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - AS BEFORE

BETH

Yeah, there's more competition
here, but there are also more
productions and a longer season.

LISA

You came because of Veronica?

BETH

I knew there'd be an opening. I
was hoping for a soloist spot, but
that'll come...

Lisa is taken with Beth's boldness. Lisa tries some of
Beth's dishes.

BETH

Try this one...it melts in your
mouth...

(beat)

Are you fucking Alex?

Lisa blushes.

BETH

I've seen the way he looks at you.

LISA
We have a working relationship-- I
wouldn't want to damage that.

BETH
Really?
(popping food in her
mouth)
I hear he takes a turn with all his
principals.

LISA
I assure you that's not true.

BETH
I'd fuck him just to be safe.
Always satisfy the artistic
director, in every sense of the
word.

Lisa laughs and shakes her head in disbelief.

LISA
You're kidding, right?

BETH
We all do whatever we can to get to
the top. Of course, ambition isn't
everything, timing and talent help--
look at that chick in your company,
Diana. She fucked him, and she
still didn't get Odette.

Beth laughs, almost snorting, and still eating.

BETH
I'm just kidding...I don't know.
That's what I heard....

LISA
Well, trust me-- I'm just not the
ambitious type, it's all about
dancing for me. I was just as
happy in the corps as I am being a
principal.

BETH
You can say that now, because
you're on top-- you don't need to
"want it," you "have it."

Beth thrusts a piece of sauce drenched chicken toward Lisa
with her chopsticks.

BETH
 General Cho was a hell of a cook,
 you got to taste this....

Lisa hesitates then takes the food off of Beth's chopstick. Her mouth looks sensual as it closes around the food and Beth slides the chopsticks over Lisa's lips.

BETH
 Mmmm...thata girl.

EXT. WELL LIT STREET - NIGHT

Lisa walks Beth back to her hotel.

LISA
 I got to admit. I'm worried about
 dancing Odile.

BETH
 The Black Swan is so much easier
 than the white. You just have to
 let it come out of you....you'll be
 great if you can loosen up...

Lisa thinks about it.

BETH
 I know you have a sensual side,
 just let us see it...

EXT. SKETCHY HOTEL - A LITTLE LATER

It is a rundown transient establishment with questionable PEOPLE inside. There is a COP CAR PARKED out front.

BETH
 Well...this is it....

LISA
 You're staying *here*?

BETH
 It's okay. Look, thanks so much
 for dinner. I really had a lot of
 fun...See you tomorrow.

Beth smiles and enters the hotel. Lisa feels awkward, then follows her inside.

INT. SKETCHY HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Two COPS are inside, off to the side, moderating a dispute between a middle-aged married COUPLE-- his ear is bleeding. The DESK CLERK is oblivious, and behind bullet proof glass.

Beth is waiting at the elevator, and is surprised when Lisa comes up behind her.

LISA
You know what? This is silly. Go
get your stuff and come home with
me.

BETH
Really?

LISA
As long as you can pay, Mother'll
be happy.

BETH
Is she your mother?

LISA
She's someone's mother, but she's
not mine.

Beth gets in the elevator.

BETH
This is great-- I'll be back in
five minutes.

LISA
Make it two...

The elevator door closes.

INT. LISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The place is dark except for the light on in the kitchen. Lisa comes in WHISPERING with Beth.

LISA
She's probably asleep--

BETH
Maybe I should just come back
tomorrow--

LISA

It's fine, I'll leave her a note so she doesn't freak if she sees you. This is the bathroom, kitchen's in there. Living room, Mother's room....

Lisa jots down a note. Beth wanders down the hall.

THE NOTE READS: A girl named Beth is taking the room. She's nice. Lisa.

Lisa slips the note under the door.

INT. LARGE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The light is on. Beth puts her bags on the bed. We should recognize them as being at least similar to the one's that Mother threw away.

Lisa steps in.

BETH

Wow. This is fantastic..

LISA

(awkwardly)

Actually...yours is next door.

Beth covers her mouth, embarrassed.

BETH

Sorry.

Lisa motions for her to follow.

INT. SMALL SPARSE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lisa enters, smiling. Beth enters and though she smiles, we can tell (and so can Lisa) that she's not as happy with this room. Beth puts her bags on the bed.

LISA

It's okay, isn't it?

BETH

It's fine.

(beat)

Compared to that hotel, my God, you're saving my life. Let's have a drink to celebrate!

LISA
I don't keep anything in the
apartment...

BETH
I may not like flying....

She zips open her bag and reaches in. We hear glass rattling and she takes out FOUR MINI LIQUOR BOTTLES. There are more in the bag.

BETH
But I love the little bottles!

Lisa laughs, amused. Beth smiles.

INT. LIVING ROOM - HOURS LATER

The lights are off except for what's on in the kitchen. There is a row of empty mini bottles on a table. Lisa and Beth are getting along great.

Lisa has the furniture moved back and is demonstrating series of ballet moves for Beth, who is watching with rapt attention.

LISA
See, he has...ba..ba...ba...ba....

She demonstrates.

BETH
Just before the dive in the fourth
act?

LISA
Uh-huh. But I think it should be
more like what Balanchine had, but
with a flourish at the end
so...ba...ba...ba....ba...

BETH
Oh, God, that looks so much
better...

LISA
Doesn't it? Maybe someday I'll
have a company....

BETH
God, that's brilliant...let me see
it again....

Lisa goes on demonstrating.

INT. MOTHER'S DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

The door is open just a crack and the girls don't notice her. Mother watches the spinning that is taking place in the living room. Her expression-- pleased or annoyed-- is impossible to read.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Beth walks Lisa to her room.

BETH
You know what the best thing is?

LISA
What?

BETH
We look so much alike...we could be sisters.

Maybe it's the buzz, but Lisa is overjoyed.

LISA
That is exactly what I was telling people and they couldn't see it!

BETH
You're kidding?!

LISA
No. I thought so right away...

Beth laughs a little. She gives Lisa a quick kiss on the cheek. Lisa is surprised.

BETH
Well...thanks again...I'll let you get your rest.
(beat)
Good night.

Beth kisses Lisa again on the cheek, but this time she lingers. Lisa feels the tingle and is a little alarmed at her feelings.

When Beth finally steps back, she makes a small sound of satisfaction. They look at each other.

LISA
(whispering)
Good night.

Beth smiles, turns and walks to the bathroom. Lisa goes into the room.

INT. LARGE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lisa, lighter than air, makes a little pirouette and turns off her light. She closes her door over to get to her nightgown which is on a hook on the back of the door. She takes off her clothes and pulls on the somewhat short nightie.

She opens her door again, but before she heads into bed, something catches her eye.

Down the hall, the bathroom light is on.

IN THE MIRROR is the reflection of Beth. Her dress is almost off and she's on the toilet peeing.

Lisa does not look away. Tension holds her eyes glued.

IN THE MIRROR, Beth slowly looks up and locks eyes with Lisa. When Beth smiles slightly there's no mistake-- she saw Lisa watching her.

CUT TO:

INT. LARGE BEDROOM - MORNING

Lisa is asleep in bed, as morning light pours down on her. We hear quiet, seemingly conspiratorial VOICES.

Lisa's eyes flutter open and she hears these voices, then some laughter.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lisa moves as quietly as she can down the hall, looking with curiosity for a view into the kitchen.

In the partial view, we see Beth is at the table, in Lisa's spot, wolfing down food and talking quietly to Mother.

Lisa is very surprised at how well the two are getting along.

Lisa keeps listening, but can't make out a word. Finally she gives up and approaches the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Beth is excited as Lisa comes to the doorway. Lisa is a little surprised to see the food piled on Lisa's plate, and the amount that's been eaten so far.

BETH
There she is. Morning roommate!

LISA
So you two met?

MOTHER
Yes, we met.

Beth laughs and it makes Mother smile, as if there's a private joke between them.

MOTHER
Eggs for you, too?

LISA
Just some yogurt, thanks...

MOTHER
Beth is a fine girl. She's going to fit in here perfectly.

Mother gives Beth a pat on the shoulder as she goes to the refrigerator to get out some yogurt. Beth smiles at Lisa and Lisa laughs a little.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Lisa and Beth have the giggles as they walk together toward the Metropolitan.

INT. UNDERGROUND GARAGE/BACKSTAGE ENTRANCE - MORNING

Lisa and Beth head up the tunnel, chatting and whispering. Now Lisa doesn't care that the Guard seems to be ignoring her - she's there with a friend!

INT. METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lisa and Beth walk through, laughing. Lisa is surprised to see Simon, the creepy stagehand, over by some flats with some other GUYS. Simon suddenly looks up at Lisa, giving her a bitter smile, but Lisa looks away.

There are other dancers passing by, including Priscilla and some corps members. They are at the awkward spot where they have to separate.

BETH

Your dressing room's that way, I think.

LISA

Yeah...so...see ya.

Lisa goes in her direction by herself, a little left out as Beth joins the sorority of Corps women and laughs and giggles with them. Beth fits in perfectly and is accepted by them, the opposite now of Lisa.

INT. LISA'S DRESSING ROOM - MORNING

Lisa is getting ready, looking in a light up mirror on a stand in front of her, as well as the light up make-up mirror attached to the table. She is startled as she catches a glimpse of movement in the mirror, then turns and gives a short gasp when she sees the Detective right behind her.

DETECTIVE

Didn't mean to startle you, Miss Albin...

Lisa calms down.

LISA

No, you didn't, it's fine.

(beat)

I just saw Simon backstage.

DETECTIVE

We released him.

She is worried her information got him in trouble and he'll hold it against her.

DETECTIVE

If you have a minute I was wondering if you could answer some questions about Alex Kardova's relationship with Veronica Field?

LISA

Sure.

DETECTIVE

Did you know they were sleeping together?

She is surprised.

DETECTIVE

And that they argued frequently. The police were called to his apartment to break up a domestic disturbance September 10th...then again on the 20th. Do you remember anything from this period? Arguments? Bruises?

LISA

No. I had no idea.

DETECTIVE

(studying her)

You don't sound sure. Is there something you're not telling me?

LISA

No.

(flustered)

I'm sorry...I have to get ready.

He smiles and nods and leaves the room. She's a little shaken as she goes back to her makeup.

INT. SMALLER REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

Alex is in a very bad mood as he goes over moves in the fourth act. This is the same section of the ballet that Lisa showed off to Beth in the apartment.

ALEX

That...that...there....

She does what he just demonstrated.

ALEX
Do it again.

She does it again.

ALEX
Not fast enough, do it again.

She does it again.

ALEX
(sarcastically)
Maybe we need some different
choreography here? Hmm? What do
you think.

LISA
No...I wouldn't--

He cuts her off. She's on the spot and he's being snide.

ALEX
No, I don't think so either. If
you could just work on the
transitions, we wouldn't have to
change it. Maybe the dancers
should dance, and leave the
choreography to me. Do it again.

He walks away, seething.

ALEX
(under his breath)
I don't have enough troubles
without another fucking diva on my
hands...

Lisa, ashamed, goes through the movements again and again.

INT. BACKSTAGE - LATER

Lisa has just been worked to within an inch of her life.
She's out of breath, drenched in sweat, toweling off.

She walks out of the rehearsal room and sees Beth far ahead.
Amazingly, Beth is telling a little joke to Simon, who says
something bawdy and flirtatious and the two share a laugh,
then part.

Lisa charges up behind Beth and taps her shoulder to turn her
around. Beth is happy to see her.

BETH
 Hey, how'd you do in there!
 (raising an eyebrow)
 I saw the door was closed.

LISA
 Did you tell Alex about the steps I
 showed you?

BETH
 Yes.

LISA
 Why?!

BETH
 I thought they were fantastic and
 you'd be too shy. He liked it-- he
 said he liked it!
 (seeing how upset Lisa is)
 I swear, I was only trying to help.
 God...I'm sorry if I messed things
 up.
 (beat)
 Do you want me to talk to him?

She takes a deep breath, thinking, but it's obvious she isn't
 really over it.

LISA
 No...it's okay. Let's just forget
 about it.

Lisa walks away. Beth looks genuinely hurt and concerned.

INT. SMALLER REHEARSAL ROOM - EVENING

Alone, Lisa is going over the moves for the Black Swan. She
 grows increasingly frustrated.

Beth is walking by the room with her bag over her shoulder,
 ready to leave. She comes in the room and watches Lisa for a
 few moments, until Lisa spots her in the mirror and stops.

BETH
 Don't stop, you were doing great.

LISA
 I'll never get the Black Swan...

BETH
Maybe you just need a good night
sleep. Ready to go?

Lisa considers it, then shakes her head.

LISA
I'm going to keep working.

Beth puts down her bag, closes the door a little, and takes off her coat.

BETH
Then I'm going to make it up to you
for messing things up with Alex.

LISA
(laughing)
You don't have to.

BETH
No, really. I danced the role at
the conservatory. I know it inside
and out. Let me take you through
it.

Lisa is touched by the offer of help, and it takes the sting off the earlier incident.

LISA
Okay.

They both laugh.

BETH
Okay...let's start from where you
first see the prince...

Lisa dances around Beth.

BETH
Get closer, but tease him. You're
about to touch him, but you
don't...

Beth, as the Prince, moves closer. Lisa draws her hand just under her chin and Beth puts her cheek on it.

Beth takes Lisa's hand and dances the Prince's part. Beth's touching becomes quite erotic and Lisa melts into it.

They dance around some more, until finally, when Lisa throws back her head, Beth kisses her lightly, but her lips brush away when she continues dancing.

Lisa dances her way back up against Beth, and Beth kisses her over her shoulder passionately, her hand over Lisa's breast. Lisa moans lightly.

There is noise of a few CORPS MEMBERS laughing as they come down the hall. Lisa steps away from Beth just as the group passes by the slightly open door.

As soon as they pass, Beth presses gently up behind Lisa again. They are both nervous. They look into each other's eyes.

EXT. METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

Lisa and Beth walk past the signs advertising Lisa for Swan Lake, and Beth hails a cab.

They both get in.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Lisa and Beth cuddle in close together.

LISA
Eighty-fifth and Columbus.

The cab starts to drive. After a few moments, Lisa puts her hand over Beth's.

The back of the cab is dark. With the scratches and stickers all over the acrylic barrier, they can barely see the driver at all.

Lisa is surprised as Beth takes Lisa's hand and puts it under her skirt.

Lisa breathes heavily, but is extremely nervous. Beth looks more calm now. She looks at Lisa who is looking away.

Suddenly Lisa turns toward her and starts kissing her passionately. Beth slips a hand into Lisa's coat and starts unbuttoning her top.

Lisa thinks for a second she catches the DRIVER'S eyes in the rearview mirror through the opening in the acrylic, but the pleasure is so overwhelming, she throws all caution to the wind and goes back to kissing Beth passionately.

INT. LISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We hear the key in the lock and heavy breathing on the other side. In a moment the door is pushed open and Lisa and Beth, kissing, make their way inside.

They press up against a flat mirror in the hall.

LISA
(whispering)
We can't let Mother see us.

They close the door, and hurry, looking around to make sure they're not seen.

INT. LARGE BEDROOM - LATER

Beth and Lisa make wild love to each other, and as it progresses, it seems Lisa is the one becoming more aggressive, and more in control.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. LARGE BEDROOM - MORNING

Light floods the room and the alarm is screaming.

Lisa wakes up and is alone. The bed is empty, and the clock says 9 a.m.

She's upset.

LISA
Beth?!

Lisa rushes to Beth's room, it's empty.

Lisa hurries and throws on clothes, then heads down the hall.

LISA
Beth? Mother?

No one is there. She rushes toward the door but stops when she sees something on the table. On top of other mail sits the package!

Lisa steps back aghast and a little angry. It's the SAME bubble wrap pack that she tossed out separately in the trash can.

She lifts the package and feels that it has the weight it would need to hold the knife. She drops it back onto the table, repulsed.

She looks around nervously, then just rushes out of the apartment, slamming the door behind her.

INT. THE STAGE - DAY

Alex is having the cast run through the third act, accompanied by the piano player. Beth, in the grey practice tutu, is dancing the Black Swan.

INT. METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE - DAY

Lisa hurries in. She immediately hears the piano player in the distance, and skips the dressing room, heading straight for the stage.

BACKSTAGE

Lisa rushes past the leering Simon, through the flats and ropes. Her POV is of the stage and she sees Beth dancing the Black Swan in HER grey practice tutu!

Lisa stops in her tracks, then walks slowly toward the stage. Emotions raging inside her, there's no telling what she'll do, but suddenly Alex is next to her, holding her arm lightly.

ALEX
(quietly)
We had to start the run through on
the third act. Beth was good
enough to stand-in for you.

Lisa watches Beth who is fantastic.

LISA
I'm sorry, I just didn't--

ALEX
(firmly)
I don't want excuses.

LISA
It won't happen again.

ALEX
It better not.

He walks away, watching the staging carefully. Lisa is so mesmerized with Beth, she can hardly move. She glances around at some of the other dancers who are watching. Priscilla looks embarrassed for her.

Beth finishes her big dance and Alex steps onto the stage.

ALEX

Okay, let's stop there....

The dancers not dancing, clap. Several rush over to Beth and gush over her.

Alex steps over to the Prince and does some corrections on his moves with him.

Beth looks over and sees Lisa. Beth looks guilty, even as praise is lavished on her. Doris gives Beth words of encouragement as she helps unhook the grey rehearsal tutu.

Beth starts to walk apologetically toward Lisa, but Lisa turns and hurries off to her dressing room.

INT. OUTSIDE DRESSING ROOM

Lisa is walking toward her dressing room. Beth is rushing up the corridor-- but is slowed by other impressed dancers who stop her to compliment.

Just before Lisa goes in her dressing room, Beth reaches her.

BETH

I was just standing in for you.
You can ask anyone-- Alex forced me
to.

(beat)

I could never replace you.

Lisa shakes her head and goes to head in.

BETH

What happened?

LISA

I over-slept. I thought I set my
alarm for six.

Beth is aghast.

BETH

God, I should have woken you up
when I left. I'm so sorry...

Lisa looks at Beth-- Beth is certainly convincing, but Lisa is too frustrated to let her off the hook.

LISA
This is my dressing room. You're
down with the corps.

Beth looks very hurt, and Lisa feels guilty immediately. Beth nods and walks off. Lisa enters the dressing room.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lisa enters and changes her clothes. She stops to look at herself in the mirror, sliding her hand sensually across her midriff.

She is flustered when there is a light knock. Doris enters with the grey tutu and looks a little guilty as she helps Lisa on with it.

INT. STAGE - DAY - LATER

Lisa is rehearsing the Black Swan role with the rest of the cast, and Alex is pushing her, stalking around her as she dances, unrelenting. Every move has a correction.

ALEX
Extension...you're turning the
knee out...head up....if you don't
feel it, we won't...

Even the more jealous dancers are having trouble with the way Alex is treating Lisa. To her credit, even when it seems she'll crack under the pressure, she finds that extra effort. Finally, after minutes of comments, Alex runs out of suggestions and Lisa finishes flawlessly.

She is sweating, stooped over panting, and on the verge of tears. Even though she was great at the end, Alex is not forthcoming with praise.

ALEX
(to the group)
That's all for today. Be on time
tomorrow.

Beth comes over to Lisa with a towel. Lisa thinks a moment then takes it.

BETH
Want to get a cab?

LISA
No...I've got to keep working.

Lisa has caught her breath and starts going through moves even as everyone else is leaving.

Beth looks guilty-- like it's her fault.

BETH
Okay...see you later.

Lisa nods, but keeps dancing even as most of the stage lights go out around her.

Alone in the theater she spins on the stage like the tiny ballerina in the music box.

INT. LISA'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Lisa, changed into dry clothes, ties the laces of his shoes, and puts her dance things in her bag.

She opens the door to her dressing room and is surprised to see the hallway is DARK.

INT. DARK CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

There are very few lights.

LISA
Hello?

There is some motion ahead and Lisa stops, a little frightened. She creeps along, then goes out to the backstage area.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

There is little light, and Lisa, hurrying to get out, seems to be lost in tangles of flats and ropes. She's sure she sees a shadow passing by ahead. She turns and goes the other way, finally finding the door.

Lisa hurries to the door and tries it. It's locked. She pushes a few times then bangs on it. She's under a red exit light.

LISA
Simon? Are you still here?!

Lisa turns suddenly, but there's nothing there.

From the exit light she sees a sign pointing to a staircase with a very old sign that says "maintenance." Lisa hurries down the stairs.

INT. MAINTENANCE ROOM - NIGHT

It is dark except for a sliver of light coming from an exit sign in the hall.

We hear footsteps approaching, then see Lisa's shadow as she enters the room.

LISA

Simon?

We see her feel around and something rattles to the ground, startling her.

LISA

Simon, the doors are locked.

Lisa feels around and finds a light switch on a LAMP on the tool bench.

Lisa is next to a tool bench and a rack of keys. She looks very relieved, and is reaching for keys when she stops suddenly.

Lisa is chilled. She turns slowly and we see what's unnerved her. There are several PHOTOGRAPHS OF HER. They have been desecrated with sexual images, cut out and drawn on.

She backs away, upset. She's next to a light switch and turns it on. But instead of being less creeped out it's worse-- the new light reveals there are hundreds of IMAGES of her, all over the wall.

She's horrified, then hears footsteps!

She turns out the lights, breathing heavily. She takes a bunch of keys carefully from the rack, then suddenly takes off running.

DARK STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

The keys rattle as Lisa runs up the stairs. She trips on the stairs and nearly falls, but drops the keys.

As she feels around for them, getting more desperate and panicked, she hears the footsteps again!

Lisa finally grabs the keys and runs up the stairs.

INT. BACKSTAGE DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Lisa rushes out. She tries a key in the door. It won't fit. She tries another, then another. She keeps looking over her shoulder, and is near tears. She tries to calm herself so she can do the keys.

She finally gets a key to fit in the lock, and the door WHIPS OPEN from the other side. Lisa lets out a short yell!

She's face to face with the disturbing Security Guard. He looks at her, both concerned and annoyed by her presence. She leaves the keys in the door, lowers her head, and runs out of the building through the tunnel leading to the garage.

CUT TO:

EXT. LISA'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Lisa is still in a hurry, but looks greatly relieved to see the building ahead. She sighs relief.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF LISA'S - A LITTLE LATER

Lisa comes off the elevator to the empty hall. She gets out her keys and quietly lets herself in.

INT. LISA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Lisa enters and is surprised to hear voices. Mother and Beth are talking quietly in the kitchen.

Lisa approaches cautiously trying to eavesdrop but she can't make out what they're saying.

She's going to enter the kitchen, but hesitates. She turns and runs down the hall.

INT. LARGE BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Lisa sits on the edge of her bed crying.

Beth steps into the doorway, concerned.

BETH
Are you okay?

LISA
Everything's going crazy I find
you dancing the Black Swan--

BETH
I told you--

LISA
Then I get locked in the theater
and I find all of these...
"pictures" of me in Simon's
workshop...

BETH
That's terrible...

Lisa continues crying.

Beth hesitates. She takes a step in and we see she's
innocently holding the package.

BETH
Someone sent you a present.

Lisa sees the package and nearly freaks out.

LISA
Get that out of here! Get it out!
No!

Beth goes over and sits next to her, comforting.

BETH
Hey, it's okay...shhhh...I know,
you had a hard day....

Lisa backs away from the embrace.

LISA
Just get rid of that, will you?

BETH
What is it?

Beth tears open the stapled end.

LISA
Don't! No! It's a knife! It's a
knife!

But Beth slides the box out and it flops open on the bed. There is NOT a knife inside-- it's a pair of old BALLET SLIPPERS.

BETH
(laughing)
It's not a knife, what's wrong with you?

Beth is puzzled. Lisa is stunned, but that's followed by a small measure of relief.

BETH
Crazy fan?...

LISA
I don't know...

BETH
Your hand's shaking...

Lisa laughs a little.

LISA
Do you have anymore of those little bottles?

Beth smiles and leaves the room for a moment. Lisa looks at the slippers, puts them and the box back in the envelope and puts them in her trash can.

Beth returns with a few little bottles.

BETH
Here. This is better.

She holds out her hand. There's a valium in it. Lisa is surprised.

BETH
It's just a valium. It'll help calm you down.

Beth hands her the pill, and opens a scotch bottle for her. She walks around the bed and gets the clock.

BETH
All you need is a good night's rest.

Beth sets the alarm and pulls the tab. Lisa looks at Beth, appreciating her care. Lisa takes the valium with the scotch.

Beth takes Lisa's shoes off and helps her get under the covers. Lisa is already woozy, and she finishes the bottle.

BETH
(far away sounding)
Don't worry about anything...just
sleep...

Lisa leans her head back against the pillow and closes her eyes. The tinkling of the music box can be heard far away.

The room starts to spin.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

The background spins and when it comes to an unsteady stop, Lisa is in the middle of the empty Cathedral. There's something about it very much like the empty THEATRE Lisa was trapped in. There are even a few pornographic pictures of Lisa taped up to the pillars in the background.

A bell is tolling and the tinkling music is playing.

Lisa's footing and the background is unsteady. She has to hold on to the pews to move. She is upset to find herself in the cheap black dress she got rid of that ended up on Beth. She sees her old bags sitting in one of the empty pews.

The coffin is where it was on the altar, but it is dusty, and worm eaten, the finish is gone, and the brass hinges and handles have been removed. The lid is off.

All the bouquets of flowers on and around the coffin when last we saw it are dead. Likewise, the flower petals strewn throughout the aisles are black, curled, and crunch when stepped upon.

Lisa's footfalls echo as she makes her way cautiously up the aisle. In the shadows there is movement-- someone watching her, just the way she felt in the theatre.

But Lisa has the courage of a dream, and does not look panicked. There are dozens of small EMPTY liquor bottles near the base of the coffin.

Lisa steps closer. Inside, the dancer is in the WHITE SWAN COSTUME, but it is very, very old, dirty and falling apart.

The person Lisa faces in the coffin makes her jaw tighten and her eyes widen in fear. Lisa, herself, is dead in the coffin.

An ALARM starts to blare!

INT. LARGE BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

The ALARM continues until Lisa turns and slaps it off.

The room is still fairly dark as Lisa bolts up in bed. She grabs the clock and checks the time-- it's 6 a.m., Beth set it for the right time.

Lisa holds her head with a crashing headache.

INT. HALLWAY - A LITTLE LATER

Lisa walks past Beth's room-- the bed is empty, but has been slept in.

She heads toward the kitchen where she sees the light on and Mother fixing breakfast.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Lisa enters. She looks at the empty place across from her as she sits. Mother puts a half a grapefruit and some yogurt in front of Lisa.

LISA
Beth in the bathroom?

MOTHER
She left about an hour ago.

Lisa thinks about this, a little uneasy.

LISA
Where did she go?

MOTHER
(shrugging)
She must have had something to do.

Lisa sits there a few more moments, then pushes the plate away and leaves the table. Mother watches her carefully then smiles slightly.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - MORNING

It is a beautiful, crisp, sunny day. Lisa still has a bad headache and she seems like she's in a hurry.

INT. BACKSTAGE ENTRANCE - MORNING

Lisa reaches the door. The Guard is slow in buzzing her in and Lisa pulls the door in vain. She looks back at him a little annoyed, and, without looking from his paper, he finally lets her in.

INT. METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lisa enters and looks around. The place seems empty, but the lights are on.

INT. SMALLER REHEARSAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The light is on and Lisa enters.

LISA

Beth?

Beth's leg warmers are there, but no Beth.

She crosses the hall to the larger rehearsal room. She turns on the lights, sees no one, then turns them off.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE REHEARSAL ROOMS - CONTINUOUS

Lisa looks around but doesn't see Beth anywhere. Giving up she heads toward her dressing room then hears a sound from the other direction.

Lisa turns and approaches cautiously.

The closer she gets, the more the sounds can be clearly heard as soft moans.

She reaches Alex's office, and the door is open a crack. She can see Alex is fucking someone on top of his desk, slamming away, nearing orgasm. Lisa would leave right then, but for one weird moment, reflected in a mirror on a wall in the office, it looks like he's fucking Mother!

Lisa is repulsed, and in recoiling, loses sight of the participants. To satisfy her curiosity she has to push the door in just a couple of more inches to get a better view.

Alex is on top of Beth!

Lisa is frozen for a moment, watching, embarrassed and upset. She looks like she'll throw up, then turns and walks quickly off.

INT. LISA'S DRESSING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

We hear Lisa throwing up in her bathroom. She comes out and tries to settle down, then spots something on her otherwise empty make-up table.

She walks over and picks up an old prescription bottle. Part of the label is torn off, so we can't see the doctor or to whom it was made out, but we see it is for thirty VALIUM.

Annoyed, Lisa tosses the bottle in the trash can.

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

Christina works out the dancers in repetitive movements. Lisa is at her spot, front and center. Beth is a couple of bars over. She is looking over at Lisa, and looking at her in the mirror, but Lisa definitely seems to be ignoring her. Beth is a little unsettled by this.

INT. STAGE - DAY

Lisa is being worked by Alex as they rehearse the beginning of Act Four, where Odette, the White Swan, learns of the betrayal by the Prince.

Lisa is determined to do her best. Alex is satisfied with Lisa's moves and seems, overall, in a much better mood.

ALEX

Nice...watch the extension...
better...

After her dance is over, Lisa waits offstage to reappear, catching her breath. Beth is nearby, looking at her.

BETH

(whispering)
Want to get some Chinese food after
rehearsal?

Lisa shoots her a chilling look, then goes back onstage. Beth looks hurt.

INT. BACKSTAGE - LATER

Sweating and exhausted, Lisa heads for her dressing room. She stops as she sees Simon standing in the corridor as if he's been waiting for her. He holds the key ring she took to try to get out of the theatre. There's something perverted about the way he strokes the keys, staring at her.

Lisa is STARTLED as Beth comes up next to her.

BETH

Hey.

When Lisa looks back at Simon, he's turned and is walking away.

BETH

I can't keep track of your moods anymore-- what's the deal today?

LISA

I saw Alex fucking you on his desk.

BETH

For your information, *I* was fucking *him*, and what the hell business is it of yours?

LISA

I know you're trying to steal my role. And you're going to use him to do it!

BETH

Listen to yourself. You are completely paranoid.

LISA

Maybe if you were a better dancer you wouldn't have to sleep your way to the top.

Beth is upset by this and stops following Lisa.

BETH

Fine. You want another enemy? You just made one...

LISA

One day you're going to know what
it's like to be *stabbed* in the
back!

Lisa casts a nasty look over her shoulder, then enters her dressing room and slams the door.

INT. LISA'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rage, fear, anxiety all tear at Lisa, as she has trouble catching her breath as soon as she's alone.

She sits at her makeup table and looks at her reflection. Her eyes drift to the pill bottle in the trash.

She hesitates, calming slightly just knowing it's there. She grabs the pill bottle but doesn't open it. She stuffs it in her bag.

INT. LISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door flies open, it's Lisa. She closes it, throws the locks and chains it.

She takes a deep breath and closes her eyes. She hears the tinkling music box in the distance. She turns, and walks curiously toward Mother's room.

The door is open a crack. Lisa pokes her head in.

INT. MOTHER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lisa looks from the doorway. The room is grim and everything is covered in thick dust, but no one is there.

LISA

Mother?

There is no answer. Lisa sees the spinning ballerina music box on the dresser.

She steps closer, mesmerized, not noticing that she's leaving tracks in the dust on the floor.

On the wall behind the music boxes, there's a tattered, yellowed newspaper article taped to the wall about a murdered ballerina named Veronica.

But--and this hardly seems possible-- the date on the article is 1934!

There are two pictures in the article, side by side. One is of the dead girl, covered with a sheet, in a pool of blood. The other is of the MURDERER, Elizabeth Bain.

The photo is very fuzzy, but it looks a lot like Lisa!

Lisa JUMPS as Mother comes up behind her. Lisa tries to calm down.

LISA

Who is that?

MOTHER

That happened a long time ago,
before you were born.

Lisa keeps staring at the pictures.

MOTHER

It's always the same. The price of
success is betrayal and pain...but
the rewards are sublime.

Lisa thinks about it. She turns and faces Mother.

LISA

I want you to kick Beth out of the
apartment.

MOTHER

Why? I thought you two--

LISA

I'll find you another girl, and
I'll pay the rent on her room until
I do. But she has to go--

MOTHER

Whatever happened between the two
of you, I'm sure you're blowing it
out of proportion.

LISA

I'm not.

MOTHER

Try to relax...all you need is some
rest....you'll feel better in the
morning.

LISA

Are you going to throw her out or not?!

Mother looks at Lisa softly, not answering. Lisa, frustrated, brushes past her and we follow her out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Lisa stalks down the hall. Behind her, we do not see Mother, but we see the creepy image of her door gently closing.

Lisa goes into her room and slams her door.

INT. LARGE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lisa sees a box in elegant black and white gift wrap on her bed. She goes to it cautiously-- there is a printed card that says, "To be opened on Opening Night."

Lisa is pleased, but her feelings slowly turn to suspicion. She looks in her trash can-- the empty bubble wrap envelope is still there, along with the box and the ballet slippers.

Lisa looks at the box in her hands and suddenly tears open the paper. Inside she finds the knife.

She closes the lid and drops it and the paper down on the bed. She looks terrified.

LATER

Freaking out, Lisa is on her bed, staring wide-eyed at the box atop the opened wrapping paper. The tip of the blade is out of the box

Suddenly she hears muffled noises from the hallway and footsteps. There are MOANS that sound like Beth and Alex having sex. A thump against the wall-- it's as if they're doing it right out in the hall.

Lisa rushes to the door, and opens it angrily, but as soon as she does, the noises stop.

LISA'S P.O.V. OF THE HALLWAY

It is empty. At the end of the hall, the chain is still thrown on the front door!

LISA

Looks like she's becoming completely unhinged. She slowly looks at her hand and is unsettled to see she is holding THE KNIFE in her clenched fist!

She lets the knife drop, pulls her head back in her room and shuts her door. As soon as she does she hears Beth's voice and laughter! It can't be!

She opens the door just a crack, but doesn't see anything, then shuts her door hard. She grabs a chair and props it under the knob to keep people out. She looks on the floor for the knife, but doesn't see it, then looks over at the bed - the point of the knife is sticking out of the box just like it was before!

Lisa approaches the knife box cautiously. She opens it and her head spins as she sees it sitting inside.

She closes her eyes and hears laughter again. She opens her eyes and catches a glimpse of Beth in the mirror, laughing.

Lisa goes to the mirror and turns it face down. She finds another mirror and hides it in the drawer.

She hears noise in the hall again and starts to cry. She backs up to the bed, sits down next to the box and sits there, freaked out.

INT. LARGE BEDROOM - MORNING

The light is pouring in. We find Lisa on her bed, still dressed, staring at the ceiling. The box sits atop the wrapping paper next to her. It is clear that she hasn't slept all night.

There is a knocking from down the hall.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The apartment is empty. We move toward the door, still chained. The knocking grows more insistent.

INT. LARGE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lisa stares blankly, listening to the knocking. She finally gets up. She pulls the chair aside and opens the door.

The knocking continues so she leaves the room.

HALLWAY

Lisa walks cautiously toward the door. She looks through the:

PEEPHOLE

The Detective is staring right at the peephole.

LISA

The sight of the Detective seems to snap her out of her trance. There is another knock and Lisa opens the door.

The Detective is not alone; there is a uniformed COP in the hall on a walkie-talkie, and ANOTHER COP is looking in the garbage chute. The Detective holds a manila folder.

DETECTIVE

May I come in?

LISA

(beat)

Of course.

She feels a change in the Detective-- he's not as nice or flirtatious as he was. Lisa goes to close the door but the Detective puts a hand on it.

DETECTIVE

Mind if we leave it open?

Lisa's mind is racing. She sees the Cops in the hall glancing at her and she doesn't know what to make of it.

DETECTIVE

A man and a woman alone; I wouldn't want any accusations to surface later.

Lisa is taken aback.

LISA

Sure....

He walks in, looking around carefully. One of the Cops walks in, gives Lisa a nod, then walks to the kitchen. It's unnerving.

DETECTIVE
Did you threaten Beth Ciarra
yesterday, Lisa?

LISA
(stunned)
Threaten her?!

DETECTIVE
She said you threatened her with a
knife.
(checking a note pad)
"She was going to know how it felt
to be stabbed."

Lisa laughs incredulously.

LISA
She threatened me. She wants my
role, she's trying to take my
role...you can't possibly believe
her...

DETECTIVE
She must want it pretty bad to lie
to the police...

LISA
Any dancer would do practically
anything to dance Odette...

DETECTIVE
It's funny to hear you say that.
Didn't you get the role because of
what happened to Veronica Field?

Lisa is flustered that he's twisting her words. The Cop in
the kitchen is looking through the cutlery drawer.

LISA
(nodding to the Cop)
What is he doing?!

DETECTIVE
How far did you go to get the Role,
Lisa?

The Detective opens and tosses down the manila folder on the
table. Sliding out are a few 8 X 10 AUTOPSY PHOTOS of
multiple stab wounds on Veronica's chest.

Aghast, Lisa covers her mouth and shakes her head.

LISA
I could never--

DETECTIVE
Did you threaten Beth Ciarra with a
knife?

LISA
No!

DETECTIVE
Veronica Field was stabbed and we
still haven't recovered the weapon.
When we find it...and we
will...we'll have the killer.

Lisa sees the Cop in the kitchen find another drawer full of
knives. He dumps them out on the table. The Detective
starts down the hall toward the bedrooms.

DETECTIVE
Do you mind if I take a look at
Veronica's room while I'm here?

Lisa thinks about it and is suddenly terrified-- the knife is
still on the bed! She rushes after the Detective.

LISA
Please...can we do this another
time?! I have to go to work...

The Detective is already in the room. Lisa follows.

INT. LARGE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Detective is surprised as he looks around, seeing the
room lived-in.

DETECTIVE
This was Veronica's room?
(beat)
Is someone else in here now?

LISA
(reluctantly)
Beth took my room...And I moved in
here.

The Detective gives her a harsh look. What makes it worse
for Lisa is he's standing right in front of the bed with the
box on it!

He picks up the VALIUM BOTTLE from the night stand, but the name is scratched off.

LISA
Those aren't mine.

He shakes his head and puts them down.

LISA
Please...I have to go.

The Detective is about to leave but he sees the box on the nest of wrapping paper.

He picks up the box.

DETECTIVE
Is it your birthday?

LISA
(desperately)
Someone keeps sending it to me,
it's not mine, I--

He opens the box. It's empty. Lisa stops cold.

LISA
Ballet slippers. A fan keeps
sending me ballet slippers...

The Detective mindlessly tosses the box back on the bed.

DETECTIVE
I'll show myself out. We'll be
talking to you again, Miss Albin.

The Detective leaves the room. Lisa catches her breath then walks out of the room.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Lisa steps out of her room and leans against the wall. The Detective stops at Mother's room, opens the door, looks in, then closes it. He gives a puzzled glance back at Lisa-- we don't see what he saw in the room, and maybe it's different than what Lisa saw.

The Cop joins the Detective from the kitchen. They whisper to each other, then walk out and close the door.

We move slowly down Lisa's BACK until we see part of the KNIFE poking out from the waistband of her pants. She had it on her the whole time she was talking to the Detective!

INT. SUBWAY - TRAVELLING - MORNING

Lisa sits trying to figure things out. She glances up and sees an old man staring at her. She looks down at her feet.

She looks to the side and sees three middle aged women glowering at her.

Uncomfortable, she looks in the other direction-- there is an HASIDIC FAMILY, all of them staring at her.

Everyone on the sparsely populated train is staring at her harshly, and they don't look away when she looks at them.

Down the car she sees Beth at a pole, but she turns away. Lisa gets up and walks over. She whispers over Beth's shoulder.

LISA

I'm going to tell Alex *everything*,
you bitch. He'll fire your ass.

The person Lisa's confronted looks back over her shoulder-- it's not Beth at all, but an old ASIAN WOMAN. She glares at Lisa just like the others on the train.

Embarrassed and confused, Lisa looks down. The train pulls into a stop, and she pushes out quickly against a rush of people trying to get on.

EXT. METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE - MORNING

Lisa comes up the stairs. She checks a watch and is relieved-- at least she's on time.

INT. UNDERGROUND GARAGE/BACKSTAGE ENTRANCE - MORNING

Lisa hurries down the tunnel. The Guard is reading the paper. She goes to pull the door but stops to wait. She has to wait several moments until he finally buzzes and she goes inside.

Inside, dancers see Lisa and look at her with a mixture of pity and pleasure. A couple whisper to each other and laugh. Lisa sees Priscilla who looks mildly disgusted with her.

LISA
Is Alex here yet?

PRISCILLA
In his office.
(beat)
I wouldn't...

Lisa looks at her like she's crazy, then hurries off.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY

As Lisa approaches, we can hear Alex quietly on the phone.

ALEX (O.S.)
Send up the girl I saw in
"Orpheus." A few more, we'll keep
it small...

Lisa walks to the open door and knocks on the door frame.
Alex looks over at her.

ALEX
Got to go...

Alex hangs up the phone.

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Lisa walks in and takes a seat to Alex's side. He looks uncomfortable.

LISA
I have to talk to you about Beth.

ALEX
It's too late. I've already made
up my mind.
(beat)
Beth will be dancing the roles of
Odette and Odile.

Lisa's mouth quivers.

ALEX
I don't feel like I can rely on
you, and Beth has proven she knows
the role inside and out.

LISA
No...

ALEX
 You're late to rehearsal, you're still clumsy when it comes to the Black Swan. You just don't want it enough.

Lisa jumps up and knocks some papers off Alex's desk.

LISA
 She sabotaged me! She reset my alarm! She made me stay up drinking!

ALEX
 Okay...
 (on the phone)
 I need a security Guard.

LISA
 Whatever she's told you is a lie! Why else do you think she'd fuck you!

He gets up angrily, grabs her by the shoulders and shakes her.

ALEX
 This has nothing to do with Beth! I talked to the police. I know you killed Veronica.

She yanks out of his grip, and smashes a few things in his office. Dancers start to congregate around the door, watching, horrified.

LISA
 That is a lie! It's another of Beth's games!

ALEX
 You need serious help--

LISA
 It's my Swan Lake! It's not yours and it's not hers!

Alex sees Simon watching from the hall and motions him in.

ALEX
 Get her out.

Lisa is horrified to see Simon and backs quickly away from him, pointing at him.

LISA
Go to his workshop! He has
pornographic pictures of me!

Simon tries to grab her but she slaps at him fiercely.

LISA
You're all against me!

The Security Guard rushes in. He manages to grab one arm and Simon gets the other.

But Lisa is fighting with all her might-- she's kicking things off the desk, trying to hit them with her head, trying to bite.

SIMON
Don't...you'll hurt yourself...

ALEX
If you come back, I'll have you
arrested.

They drag her out of the room through the crowd of stunned dancers.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Lisa is being dragged by Simon and the Guard, still fighting hard. Alex comes out of his office yelling.

ALEX
Don't try to buy a ticket...don't
stand outside the theater...if I
see you, I'll have you arrested!

Lisa stops struggling and tries to compose herself. But she sees Beth sitting in a chair near the stage, eating a yogurt and watching the whole thing like it's a show for her benefit.

Beth smiles smugly at Lisa and shakes her head, then takes another spoonful of yogurt.

Lisa SCREAMS WILDLY, breaks away from Simon and only the security Guard's grip keeps her from scratching Beth's face. Even though Lisa makes it to within a foot of Beth, Beth doesn't flinch.

Simon grabs her arm, and he and the Guard pull her away to the exit. Lisa screams and cries.

INT. UNDERGROUND GARAGE/BACKSTAGE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Once she's outside, Lisa tries to compose herself again as the men walk her up the tunnel.

LISA
I'm okay, I'm sorry, I just have to
talk to Alex...I can explain this,
I can explain...I just need a
chance...please...

As they reach the end of the tunnel they let her go, but block her way.

LISA
Please? I'll do anything...

SIMON
Sorry...

Lisa isn't going to get back in. She slowly walks off.

EXT. METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE - DAY

Lisa, dazed, walks past the spot where Veronica landed-- there's still a stain in the cracks of the granite slabs.

She walks toward the street and past the upright poster. Her name is already being pasted over. It's now "Swan Lake, starring Beth Ciarra."

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

A crowd of MEN and WOMEN in suits, gowns, jewels and furs waits anxiously as the doors are finally opened. It's opening night, and there is excitement in the air. People are buzzing.

Some suited people are still walking around trying to get tickets, but it's sold out, and no one is giving up their seat.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Beth, in the White Swan costume, is walking around nervously, shaking out her bare arms. The other Dancers give her plenty of room.

She jumps when a hand comes down on her shoulder-- we might think for a moment it's Lisa, but we see the hand belongs to Alex. He's there to settle her down.

ALEX
(quietly)
This is your night...

She presses against him, turns her head back and kisses him. Priscilla and a couple of other dancers see it from several yards away, and turn away discretely.

INT. METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE SEATING - NIGHT

People are taking their seats, anxious and excited.

A MAN in an upper ring reads a program.

An OLD WOMAN in the first ring readies her opera glasses.

Suddenly the CHANDELIERS start to rise to the ceiling and the lights dim.

The CONDUCTOR comes out and receives applause. He begins.

The curtain opens to a fantastic set, and the Prince bounding around the stage.

The orchestra BOOMS.

CUT TO:

INT. LARGE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dead silence.

Lisa is sitting on her bed in the dark, staring ahead blankly. The bottle of pills is on the bed along with the knife in the box. Lisa is in a state of mental collapse, and she hardly reacts to the light knock at her door.

After a few moments, Mother opens the door and enters with a tray of food. Light comes in from the hall.

MOTHER
I thought you were in here...what happened? Isn't it opening night?

LISA
Yeah.

Mother looks at her, waiting for an explanation.

LISA
I lost the role.

MOTHER
(incredulous)
What?

LISA
They took it away from me.

MOTHER
Take it back.

LISA
It's too late.

Mother stands back staring at Lisa.

MOTHER
I see you opened my little gift.

Lisa looks at Mother, not understanding. She is surprised when Mother picks up the box and opens it. The knife is inside and Mother takes it out.

LISA
Your gift?

MOTHER
You were born to dance Swan Lake.
It's your role, Lisa. And if you
really want it....

The blade GLINTS in Lisa's eye and she looks at her own reflection in it. She looks up at Mother who is steady and imperious.

MOTHER
It isn't theirs to take.

Lisa looks energized. She slowly takes the knife from Mother's hand and tightens her own hand around the handle.

MOTHER
(firmly)
Take it back....

Lisa suddenly bolts up out of bed.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Beth, in costume, leaps into frame. We watch her dancing the Second Act with tremendous longing, pain and passion. There is tremendous vulnerability that we haven't seen in her personality that makes us unable to take our eyes off of her.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT

Lisa is storming up the path, eyes blazing. One MEMBER of a group of LAUGHING FEMALE TEENS accidentally steps into her path and they bump into each other. There is a CLATTER.

The Teen looks down to pick up what's fallen, but is aghast to see it is the LARGE KNIFE that has fallen out of Lisa's coat. The Teen looks at Lisa, sees her blazing eyes, then backs away.

Lisa snatches up the knife, conceals it back in her coat, then continues her brisk pace.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Beth dances her heart out as Act Two ends. She receives thunderous applause at the curtain closes.

We follow her as she runs, out of breath, toward the dressing rooms.

INT. LISA'S OLD DRESSING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Doris helps Beth change into her Black Swan Costume.

BETH

Oww...

DORIS

Sorry...

BETH

Just get out, I'll do it myself.

DORIS

But--

BETH

Get out!

Doris leaves and Beth continues dressing.

EXT. METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

Lisa rushes up the row of posters. She looks at a poster, then pulls off the strip with the name "Beth Ciarra" on it. She turns to the next, and tears that strip. She tears another.

THEATRE

Lisa comes across the plaza, but there are Security Guards posted at the doors. She lowers her head and keeps walking. She heads into the Vivian Beaumont Theatre.

INT. UNDERGROUND PASSAGES - NIGHT

Lisa stalks through the empty, maze-like underground passages beneath Lincoln Center. She follows an arrow pointing to the Metropolitan.

Lisa goes up the escalator to the box office.

SIDE OF THE LOBBY

The music echoes out from the theatre.

Lisa gets to a door not far from the box office window. Lisa goes to a pay phone and pretends to make a call.

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Beth dances the third act, and the crowd eats it up.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

An USHER leaves through the side door. Lisa waits until the slow closing door almost clicks shut, then drops the phone, grabs the knob, and slips inside.

INT. THEATRE

Lisa lowers her head and hurries past the financial offices. The music gets louder as she goes.

BACKSTAGE

Lisa creeps through the wings until she reaches a spot in the shadows where she can't be seen but can see Beth dancing the Black Swan.

Lisa is filled with jealousy as she watches the perfect performance.

She sees some Dancers approaching and slinks back into the shadows.

Priscilla senses something and looks over at the spot where we just saw Lisa, but Lisa is gone.

STAGE

The Third Act ends, the curtain comes down and the Dancers catch their breath, then leave the stage.

A few dancers have kind words for Beth, and Alex comes over to her beaming. They chat, he kisses her lightly, then walks off with her toward the dressing rooms.

INT. LISA'S OLD DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

We hear Beth and Alex approaching the dressing room.

ALEX (O.C.)

So, after the show...we'll have a little celebration of our own...

We see them kiss, then Lisa slips into the room and closes the door.

Beth goes to the rack for the costume, but it isn't there. She is perplexed, then sees Lisa's reflection in the closet door. Lisa is wearing the White Swan Costume!

Beth swallows hard.

LISA

You stole my part. You stole my dressing room. You stole my life...but I'm taking it back. I'm going to dance the final act.

Lisa pulls her hand up from her side and we see she's holding the knife. She looks crazed.

BETH

It was you. You murdered Veronica.

Beth seethes. Lisa takes a half step forward.

LISA

You stole my role...

BETH

If you could dance better, you
wouldn't have had to kill someone
to get it. You're *pathetic*.

Lisa raises up the knife and lunges forward to stab her. Beth quickly moves to the side and grabs her by the wrist. They struggle. Lisa nearly gets the knife into Beth's throat, but Beth always seems to move aside at the last moment.

Beth swing Lisa's arms against the make-up table and Lisa drops the knife. Lisa goes to grab it, but Beth kicks it away.

Beth scampers over to the knife and picks it up. She turns slowly to Lisa.

Frightened, Lisa runs out of the room.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Lisa runs out and goes into a stairwell.

Beth runs out after her and follows. No one is around to see them.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Beth starts running down the stairs then stops. She listens carefully. A WHITE FEATHER floats down past her from above. She looks up and sees Lisa on the stairs, horrified at being seen. Lisa starts running up. Beth follows.

TOP LANDING

Lisa looks around, she has nowhere to go, except up the ladder that leads to the roof. She scampers up it as we hear Beth getting closer.

BETH

She has out the knife and is determined to use it.

BETH
Lisa....let's talk....

She hears a thud and as she reaches the top, realizes it's the top to the roof. Beth goes up the ladder.

EXT. ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Beth comes out on the roof. She looks around and walks cautiously across the gravel.

She spots footprints in the moonlight, leading around the corner of a large, noisy HVAC compressor. Beth sees a small white feather floating nearby.

BEHIND THE COMPRESSOR

Lisa has found herself a pipe and is ready to hit Beth as soon as she comes around the corner.

Her hands clench the pipe.

We see, but Lisa doesn't, that Beth is silently coming around the other side of the compressor. Out of focus, she creeps slowly closer to Lisa, then disappears from our view for a moment.

We stay on Lisa's face as she grits her teeth, waiting for Beth.

BETH (O.S.)
(whispering)
Lisa...

Lisa turns suddenly and the KNIFE STRIKES HER IN THE CHEST, on bare skin above her costume.

Lisa's grip relaxes on the pipe and she drops it. She looks completely stunned as she falls.

Beth QUICKLY starts yanking the costume off of her, managing to pull it down before even a spot of blood gets on it. Beth pulls it off Lisa's legs, leaving her naked.

Beth watches Lisa for a moment as Lisa squirms and blood starts to pour from her chest. Satisfied, Beth walks away toward the hatch.

INT. LISA'S OLD DRESSING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Beth is pulling on the White Swan costume for Act Four.
There is a knock at the door.

VOICE

Beth! Two minutes!

Beth gets in the costume and does up the hooks.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Alex is looking upset that his star isn't there.

ALEX

Where the hell is she...

Just then Beth rushes out and takes her place. Relieved,
Alex nods for the curtain to open.

Beth begins dancing and is FANTASTIC. Every move is so
emotional, the crowd bursts into spontaneous applause.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

The dull sound of the APPLAUSE rising from the opera house
seems to rouse Lisa. Holding her chest, she manages to get
to her knees, then to her feet.

In her haze of blood loss, Lisa begins dancing to the far
away music.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Beth dances like she's never danced before.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Lisa matches her. In her haze she is magnificent.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Beth dances her way up the cliff side, just like Lisa did in her dream at the beginning of the film.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Lisa is staggering now. She can barely stay on her feet. She looks up at the stars and in one final burst of energy starts to run toward the edge of the roof.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Beth runs to the top and leaps off the cliff in a swan dive.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT SKY - CONTINUOUS

Lisa leaps from the roof in a swan dive.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Beth lands on a stack of mattresses, and rolls off of them to the applause and congratulatory hugs of her fellow Dancers.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. PLAZA - CONTINUOUS

We see Lisa hit the granite hard. A few people, far in the distance point and scream.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

At the curtain call, Beth appears to THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE. She is given an immense bouquet of roses, from which she presents one to her Prince.

Ballet Fanatics crowd the front of the stage and toss bouquets at Beth. The wild applause continues, as the bouquets pile up in a small mountain around Beth, much like the pile we saw on the coffin in the Cathedral.

EXT. METROPOLITAN COURTYARD - NIGHT

Lisa's eyes are open and she is in bitter anguish over the applause she hears erupting from the Metropolitan. She grits her teeth, her face spattered with her own blood, and she tries to move but cannot.

MOTHER (O.S.)
That should be your applause...

PULLING BACK

We see Mother is on one knee next to Lisa, the first to arrive to her aid. Mother puts the music box in front of her face and opens the lid. The ballerina dances but the music is slowing down and the dancer is less steady.

MOTHER
(whispering)
What if I told you...I could give you a chance for revenge...that you could reclaim the glory Beth stole from you...

Lisa manages to move her eyes to look at Mother. Mother looks wild eyed. We hear people approaching.

VOICES
Is she dead! Oh my God! Call an ambulance!

MOTHER
(whispering)
Everything she has done to you, you will get to do to her.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. LISA'S APARTMENT - DAY

This time it is Lisa pushing clothes into her suitcase. She ZIPS it shut.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. GREYHOUND - TRAVELLING - DAY

Lisa is pressed against the window, excited about the scenery and the adventure.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. METROPOLITAN COURTYARD - NIGHT

Lisa on the ground, with her dying breath, filled with hatred, nods to Mother.

Mother smiles. Lisa dies.

Mother deftly removes the knife from Lisa's chest, puts it in THE BOX we've seen and walks away from the corpse.

Just then, onlookers arrive and encircle the body.

Mother puts the box into a pre-addressed bubble-pack envelope.

AT A MAILBOX

Mother mails the package.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Champagne is UNCORKED as everyone congratulates Beth. Some of the congratulations, like the one from Diana, seem forced.

Alex pours several glasses of Champagne and raises his.

ALEX

To the greatest performance of Swan
Lake anyone's ever seen!

He drinks as do several dancers. There is nothing but, at least the appearance of, good cheer and celebration.

INT. LISA'S OLD DRESSING ROOM - LATER

Beth walks in with arms full of flowers. Even more than that have been brought and placed in the dressing room.

Beth hears something strange and steps forward. It is the wobbly tinkling of the music box which is open on the make-up table.

Beth is surprised to see Mother standing next to the table, waiting.

BETH
What are you doing here?

MOTHER
I came to congratulate you, my dear. You did it. You got your revenge.
(beat)
But now you have to pay the price, Lisa.

BETH
(confused)
What are you talking about? I'm Beth.

MOTHER
No you're not. You got what you wanted, Lisa. Remember? You're Lisa.

Beth reels. She looks at mother and shakes her head vehemently.

BETH
That can't be.

MOTHER
What goes around comes around.

Beth is horrified, even more so as the music box stops and the ballerina falls over.

It all sinks in and Beth looks overwhelmed by the pain of realizing that what Mother has told her is true.

Mother picks up the box and starts to WIND.

BETH

As the key to the music box is wound, the entire film rewinds rapidly all the way to the beginning.

Beth slowly closes her eyes.

CUT TO BLACK:

DARKNESS

Through the Silence we hear the distant WINDING of the music box.

FADE IN:

CLOSE UP OF A MUSIC BOX

A tiny white BALLERINA spins to tinny music.

INT. MOTHER'S ROOM - MORNING

Mother sets down the music box on her dresser. The tiny Ballerina starts to spin.

Mother looks pleased. She turns and we follow her out of the room.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mother walks toward the bedrooms and we follow. She passes the Larger Bedroom and goes to the smaller, slipping into the room.

INT. SMALL SPARSE BEDROOM - MORNING (CONTINUOUS)

Mother goes to the bed and looks down on the sleeping Beth, now in the same spot where we originally found Lisa! Beth's eyes suddenly spring open.

MOTHER

Wake up. It's a brand new day!

CUT TO BLACK.