

THE LAST SHOWGIRL

Written by
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Directed by
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OVER BLACK...

A musical number is coming to an end, the lyrics saying something along the lines of "I've got my top hat and my tails and hundreds of beautiful giiiiirls!" We HEAR DANCERS coming off stage, breathing hard, heels clacking on metal stairs, hallway chatter, the bustle of dozens of women.

FADE IN:

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

The number ends as many DANCERS including MARY-ANNE (35) and JODIE (19) run off stage.

MARY-ANNE

Did someone raid a cemetery for
this fucken audience?

As the dancers funnel through a doorway, Mary-Anne rips her costume on a door handle.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

Shit--

JODIE

Shhh!

MARY-ANNE

Did that just rip?

JODIE (CONT'D)

Go go go.

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Mary-Anne and Jodie hustle through the labyrinth-like underbelly of the theater, past huge set pieces...

MARY-ANNE

When did they install that new door
handle?

JODIE

Three months ago?

Hallways lined with shelves of feathered headpieces...

MARY-ANNE

That thing's like asking to get
ripped costumes. Are you sure?? Is
it really ripped??

JODIE

Yeah, it's *ripped*-- I have like,
20/20 vision.

MARY-ANNE

Good for fucken you, Jodie.

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A simple curtain serves as a door to the dressing room where Jodie, Mary-Anne and other dancers change costumes, bobbing and weaving around each other for costume pieces, wigs, rhinestoned accessories: they've done this a THOUSAND times.

Bulb rimmed mirror dressing table stations show years of personalization by the dancers.

SHELLY (50's but ageless and beautiful inside and out) enters. Her costume is badly ripped.

SHELLY

I caught my wing on that door
handle!

MARY-ANNE

It's a trap-- they're so desperate
for money, they're trying to
squeeze it back out of us--

JODIE

That's paranoid--

SHELLY

They need to change that! I mean
look at this!
(re: her ripped wing)
Look at this gaping hole--

JODIE

You need to change your costume,
Shelly!

SHELLY

I am, I will, I just-- ugh, look at
this.

She mourns the costume.

SHELLY (CONT'D)

I love this darn wing.

Jodie's costume is on so she helps Shelly.

JODIE
 (to Shelly)
 Gimme your shoes.

Shelly sits back on her table. Jodie unfastens Shelly's shoes and puts on her other shoes.

SHELLY
 You know, of all the costumes in
 the whole show, these are the
 oldest wings.
 (to the wing fabric)
 Shoot. Ida's gonna kill me.

MARY-ANNE
 Whatever. That old Russian bitch
 has hated me for like, nine years--

JODIE
 Because you keep losing rhinestones
 and feathers--
 (to Shelly)
 Where's your clip-ons?

MARY-ANNE
 It's not like I'm trying to be a
 klutz-- I'm fucken dancing out
 there, what the hell, I am DANCING.

SHELLY
 It's just so disappointing. Lemons
 and now this.

MARY-ANNE
Lemons??

SHELLY
 Oh, they're just so expensive
 recently.

JODIE
 Clip-ons, *SHELLY!*

SHELLY
 They're right there, sweetie.

JODIE
 Okay can you please put them on?

SHELLY

Yes, I'm doing it, jeez. They're like eighty-nine cents a piece, which I just think-- it's-- it's lemons-- it's not even really *food*, you know? It's like a garnish or it's, you know, it's like *herbs*-- it's like *accessories*--

MARY-ANNE

Who *needs lemons*??

JODIE

Let's go--

They exit, heading back toward the stage.

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Shelly, Jodie and Mary-Anne adjust pieces of their costumes as they hurry to the stage.

SHELLY

Well I'm buying some nice salmon steaks for dinner cuz I'm entertaining tomorrow, and there's this beautiful picture of-- of these salmon steaks in the Ina Garten cookbook?

JODIE

Music is changing!!

Jodie works on Shelly's headdress snaps.

SHELLY

And there are lovely thin lemon slices on the-- on the salmon, and so I do. I need them, I need the lemons.

JODIE

Shelly, you've got the wrong clip ons!

SHELLY

When did they put that door handle in anyway like two weeks ago?

JODIE

It was three months ago.

SHELLY
I always forget it's there.

JODIE
That's cuz you're old!

SHELLY
I'm older, I'm not actually *that*
old--

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

They head up the stairs, Shelly, behind the others.

Jodie, Mary-Anne and then Shelly go back through the door with the bad handle.

JODIE
C'mon, c'mon.

MARY-ANNE
Fuck you, door handle.

SHELLY
I wish that hadn't happened. I wish I could go back in time, see that door handle, say to myself "Ope, there's that terrible door handle, it's right there" and then, you know, just not have--

They pass EDDIE (50's), the stage manager.

EDDIE
Do you girls mind moving a little, a *little* fucken faster? Everyone else is out there, you're the only ones taking your time like you're at fucken brunch.

MARY-ANNE
Like anyone gives a flying shit out there, Eddie. What are there, twelve people?

EDDIE
Excuse me, you know who gives a shit? I do. I give a shit. My job that you girls get on stage.

SHELLY
Have we ever not made it on stage, Eddie?

EDDIE
 (into his headset)
 Cue 453, go.

Shelly, Mary-Anne and Jodie jazz rush into the blinding lights on the stage.

TITLE CARD: THE LAST SHOWGIRL

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY.

Shelly and her best friend ANNETTE (60, amazing legs, ex-showgirl) are at the checkout counter.

INT. SUPERMARKET. SELF CHECK-OUT - MOMENTS LATER

Shelly tries to scan her items as Annette flips through People Magazine.

ANNETTE
 So who's the guy?

SHELLY
 Rick. He saw me leaving the theater.

ANNETTE
 Ooh a little stage door Johnny situation? Paging stage door Johnnayyy!! Aisle four!

SHELLY
 No, shh! No-- he recognized me in the parking lot.

ANNETTE
 He think you're an escort on the side?

SHELLY
 No, *Annette*.

ANNETTE
 Guys think that! Well they do.

SHELLY
 Rick is nice. He likes me. He doesn't think that.

CHECK OUT MACHINE
 Please scan your item again.

SHELLY

(re: the tally screen)
It's on there, it's right there.

ANNETTE

Yeah but it's telling you to scan
it again.

CHECK OUT MACHINE

Please scan your item again.

ANNETTE

Put it in the bag.

...Shelly does. Then her flip phone alerts. She looks at it.
Her face drops. Annette takes the phone, squints, reads it
herself.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

Have to cancel tonight. Working
late. Rain check. Sorry.
(off Shelly, bummed)
You wanna return the fish?

SHELLY

...No, it's okay.

INT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Shelly slices lemons, placing them on raw salmon filets as
Annette, Mary-Anne and Jodie weave about the kitchen. Jodie
sets the dinner table. Annette makes margaritas. Mary-Anne
opens a naval orange.

ANNETTE

Well then I won so what the fuck
does it matter if I *previously* lost?
(to Mary-Anne)
You wanna maybe not eat an orange
before dinner?

MARY-ANNE

There's only enough fish for two
people, Annette, I'm trying to get
it where I can.

SHELLY

I know this is impromptu but I got
enough-- I got a lot. Men like to
be fed.

JODIE

Shelly who was this guy anyway?

ANNETTE

Rick the dick. I bet you he was married.

SHELLY

He was divorced-- he didn't have a ring.

ANNETTE

You check his pockets?

SHELLY

He liked me, okay?

ANNETTE

Uh-huh, that's why we're eating his fish. Listen, you guys don't have to worry about me. I'm a very lucky person-- I have luck, you know what I mean? I *have* it, it's *in* me. Not everybody's like that.

MARY-ANNE

Sure.

JODIE

Are you gonna save your winnings for when you retire?

ANNETTE

Retire?! Like, bankers retire. Waddaya think I have a 501k? I'm gonna work and then I'm gonna work some more and then I'm gonna die. I'll probably die in my uniform. That's my long-term plan.

JODIE

You don't want to retire?

ANNETTE

It's not an option, Jodie.

JODIE

Isn't it like, a requirement?

ANNETTE

Esmee Rodriguez-- She's 83, still cocktailing at the Paris.

SHELLY

No way, she's not 83.

ANNETTE

Yes she is, she's 83. I got an invitation to the party but I didn't go, I hate soft foods.

JODIE

I can't wait to retire.

MARY-ANNE

You're nineteen!

JODIE

It just seems like a wonderful time in life, I dunno, I just think it seems fun-- learning new things, you know, maybe taking up a new language--

ANNETTE

You can't learn a new language that late in life, the brain doesn't work that way--

SHELLY

I want to learn French one day.

JODIE

I love languages. I can say "Je m'appelle Jodie." I know how to say "My Name Is Jodie" in five languages.

MARY-ANNE

That's like, the most useless phrase ever.

JODIE (CONT'D)

--Including English--
Useless?? Are you kidding??

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

You could just point to yourself and say "JODIE."

JODIE

Shelly, let's learn French together.

SHELLY

Je m'appelle Shelly!

ANNETTE

Guys, I like my life, okay? I like it. I like my job, not everyone likes playing grab-ass with a bunch of coked up gamblers at ten am--

JODIE

But you are one.

ANNETTE

Yes, I don't mind it. They amuse me. And then I drink and gamble on my own time.

SHELLY

Annette is a *bon vivant*!

ANNETTE

French!

The doorbell RINGS. Shelly wipes her hands.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

Who's that?

JODIE

Oh, it's Eddie!

MARY-ANNE

What?? That's gonna be so weird.

JODIE

No it's not. He's like our dad.

MARY-ANNE

He's not like our dad, he's seen our boobs like a thousand times.

ANNETTE

Haven't you ever heard of an *impromptu girl's night*??

JODIE

He's sweet! When was the last time you saw Eddie anyway?

ANNETTE

I haven't seen Eddie since I left the show. And I have not missed him.

JODIE

Well that's not nice. I feel like we're all kinda like a big family.

SHELLY

Sisters, sure, I can see that--

MARY-ANNE

If this is a family, it's pretty fucked up we're all tits out all the time.

JODIE

No like, you're our mom... and
Eddie's--

MARY-ANNE

You're trying to make Shelly your
mom and Eddie your dad?

The doorbell rings again. Jodie looks dejected.

Annette, with her margarita, heads towards the patio, Mary-
Anne and Jodie take their own drinks and follow her.

SHELLY

I mean, I guess I think of us as a
family.

ANNETTE

Well I'll be outside, trying to get
drunk real fast.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. BACKYARD PATIO - MOMENTS LATER

Shelly brings Eddie outside. He has a bottle of red wine in
hand. Mary-Anne, Annette and Jodie lounge on the old Sears
furniture. Eddie is awkward as hell.

SHELLY

Look who's here!

JODIE

Welcome, Eddie!

Mary-Anne glares at her.

EDDIE

Hi girls, Annette. Nice to see you.

ANNETTE

Eddie. I'd hug you but I'm
sweating.

EDDIE

That's okay.

He goes in for a hug.

ANNETTE

No really, I'm not gonna hug you.
I'm sweating.

EDDIE

Okay.

ANNETTE

But it's awful good to see ya,
Eddie!

EDDIE

You too, the show's not the same
without you.

ANNETTE

It's not? I feel like it is.

EDDIE

Well... Technically... it is. It is
the same show.

ANNETTE

Yeah...

EDDIE

I was just talking figuratively.

ANNETTE

Got it.

Jodie eyes Mary-Anne: *wtf is Annette's problem??*

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

Who took over my track again? Was
it Valerie?

EDDIE

Francine.

ANNETTE

Francine-- she sucked-- She can't
fouetté. What a terrible dancer.

EDDIE

She's not that bad.

ANNETTE

How did she take over my track? She
does my pas de deux in the fairy
ballet? She can't partner. Did she
ever learn how to partner?

EDDIE

It's been six years since you left
and she does it every night so
yeah, she figured it out.

SHELLY

So, Eddie brought some wine. Should I... should I open it up?
(she squints at the label)
It's a *Malbec*. A little *Malbec* for anyone? Annette? Mary-Anne?

MARY-ANNE

I'm allergic to red wine.

ANNETTE

Um, no. I'm drinking a margaritas.

SHELLY

Okay.

She heads into the house for a wine key.

EDDIE

I just brought it because-- well it's funny-- when I was on Siegfried and Roy, those guys had us over on off days and-- and they went pretty hard on the red wine...

MARY-ANNE

(that's not a thing)
They went *hard* on red wine?

EDDIE

Yeah... was ages ago.
(awkward pause)
There was this one time I got caught in the escape trap with the white tiger.

JODIE

What?! *No!*

EDDIE

Well, the white tiger is supposed to disappear off the stage, right? During his trick. And when I open the escape door on the floor of the stage, the tiger knows to go through a tunnel, and into a holding pen. But somehow... *I* got caught *in* the holding pen. *With* the white tiger. Man, I was shitting with fear.

JODIE

That is *insane!!* Did the tiger swat at you?

EDDIE

No.

JODIE

...They're very well-trained, huh?

EDDIE

Very. It's impressive.

JODIE

I mean that's scary though.

ANNETTE

...Great story, Eddie.

INT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. EAT-IN-KITCHEN - LATER

Shelly, Eddie, Annette, Mary-Anne and Jodie eat. Shelly's the only one with no fish on her plate. Eddie looks really uncomfortable. Clearing his throat. Looking at the ceiling.

Mary-Anne gets up and goes to rummage through the fridge.

MARY-ANNE

I'm still hungry. It was like two ounces of fish.

SHELLY

There's a Cup a' Noodles above the fridge.

Jodie leans into Eddie, sotto.

JODIE

Eddie, you okay? I swallowed a teeny fish bone, did you too?

EDDIE

No, no.

(nervous)

Um, listen so, I didn't come here tonight just to um-- uh, I need to tell you something.

SHELLY

Are you okay?

EDDIE

...Muffy told me that the show is closing.

Shelly stops dead in her tracks. Annette stops eating. Mary-Anne closes the fridge.

SHELLY

Sorry, what?

EDDIE

The show is closing.

ANNETTE

Way to bury the lead, ya shithead!

EDDIE

Don't call me a shithead, Annette.

ANNETTE

Well then don't fucken drop a bomb
an hour after you've arrived!

MARY-ANNE

Hold on, hold on. Muffy is senile,
okay? She's a thousand years old
and she's about to fucken die.

SHELLY

She's not senile.

(to Eddie)

Are you-- I mean, what did she say?

EDDIE

These new casino owners, they want
to put their own stamp on a place.
They brought in the circus-- that
show's doing really well--

SHELLY

It is?? I just think who puts money
into a circus that's not Cirque du
Soleil, right? That's dumb--

EDDIE

That's the whole point. It's
alternative, it's dirty--

SHELLY

A dirty circus?

EDDIE

Yeah, you know, it's edgy-- it's
for adults.

JODIE

I knew when we started sharing our
theater, when they took over our
Thursday, Friday and Saturday
performances, it was a bad sign.

MARY-ANNE

No shit, also no you did not.

SHELLY

No no no, our show is legendary.

Mary-Anne cringes.

EDDIE

Le Razzle Dazzle-- it's old, it's the only show left of its kind on the strip.

SHELLY

But the fact that it's the only one left-- that's why it's so special! I mean our show is a *show*! Come on! -- The costumes, the sets.

MARY-ANNE

It is a dinosaur, Shelly.

EDDIE

I think we're gonna get notice tomorrow.

SHELLY

Are you kidding? You heard this from-- from Muffy?

EDDIE

Yeah.

Shelly runs out, failing to hide her emotion.

ANNETTE

(suddenly outraged,
yelling at Eddie.)

What is wrong with you?? Whaddayou like being the bearer of bad news?

EDDIE

I thought it was important information, I wanted them to hear it from me.

ANNETTE

Well your important information just broke her fucking heart.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. DRESSING ROOM - TUESDAY EVENING

Shelly, Mary-Anne, Jodie and other DANCERS are in make-up and hair, listening to Eddie on the PA.

EDDIE (O.S.)
Good evening ladies and gentlemen.

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. COMPANY MANAGEMENT OFFICE - SAME

The office walls are covered in old signed headshots of all the girls who have been in the show, as well as posters from a 1980's American Express ad campaign featuring Showgirls in different iconic locations around the world.

Eddie speaks into a mic.

EDDIE
(reading from a notice)
I regret to inform you that Le Razzle Dazzle will have it's final performance in two weeks. On behalf of Muffy, as well as our long-time producing partners at the casino, the decision to close the show was a hard one to make, but it's been an incredible thirty-eight year run, and they thank everyone for their hard work over the years.

The PA turns off.

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Shelly is livid. The PA turns on again.

EDDIE (O.S.)
This is your fifteen minute call, ladies and gentlemen. Fifteen minutes to curtain.

The PA turns off again.

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. COMPANY MANAGEMENT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Eddie turns the PA on again.

EDDIE
I just wanted to say that on behalf of myself...
(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

your hard work and dedication has really been something. Um. I wish everybody a great show tonight, and great shows over the next two weeks.

CUT TO:

EXT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. ROOFTOP - EVENING

Shelly, in full costume and make-up, looks out at Las Vegas. The feathers and rhinestones of her costume, her enormous fake eyelashes, caked on foundation, and crusty red lipstick juxtaposed with the evening sky and purple mountains in the distance are an almost impossible mix of nature and artifice.

Jodie approaches.

JODIE

...Hey.

She looks out at the view too.

SHELLY

If they just pumped a little more money into our advertising campaign... I mean our shots are from the early eighties...

JODIE

Aren't you in some of those shots?

SHELLY

I am...

JODIE

You had the Hindenburg solo.

SHELLY

I did...

JODIE

How long did you do it?

SHELLY

Um... when I was cast in '87 until about '99 when Renata joined the cast-- then she took it over.

JODIE

I bet you were great...

Shelly smiles, appreciative of Jodie's admiration.

JODIE (CONT'D)

(after a bit)

Did you ever want to get married?

SHELLY

I was married for a short time when I was really young.

JODIE

What happened?

SHELLY

Oh you know, it didn't work out-- I was dancing-- I was already in the show here when we met, and he didn't like it so much-- Vegas. And then he got a job in New York, but the show here was really thriving-- there was a lot of press around us-- it was so exciting and I was very young-- so I stayed here.

JODIE

So what did you do?

SHELLY

We tried to make it work for a couple years but he eventually met someone there. He asked me if I'd consider trying to dance in New York, and I did-- I tried it. I went to an open call for the Rockettes, I went to an open call for a Broadway musical, but... I really, I just missed the thrill of the show here...

JODIE

You'd be a perfect Rockette.

SHELLY

Nah, I found all that kicking very redundant.

Jodie smiles, sensitive to Shelly's rationalization. They look out at the mountains.

INT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

Shelly gathers some dinner ingredients out of her fridge. She closes the door, looks at the school photo of Hannah stuck on with a magnet.

INT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

On a coil-cord phone, Shelly leaves a phone message as chicken grills on her too-hot stove top.

SHELLY

Hey Hannie! Oh I just tried to call you Hannah and honey at the same time-- Hannie-- haha-- anyway, Hi *Hannah, honey*.

(abandoning the grill)

Just wanted to check in and say hello and see if you'd want to meet me for a bite or a cup of coffee-- or well, I don't drink coffee but I could have some tea-- or, what I'd really like is a nice *drink* but that's... that'd be inappropriate 'cause you're only... you're not old enou-- you're only twenty... oh shit. Oh shit, you're twenty two-- oh my god, how do I delete this thing...?

She hits a few numbers on the phone, trying to access a main menu. The SMOKE ALARM goes off.

SHELLY (CONT'D)

Oh shut up...

ANSWERING MACHINE VOICE

To listen to your message, press one...

She waves an oven mitt at the smoke.

ANSWERING MACHINE VOICE (CONT'D)

To continue recording where you left off, press two.

Shelly pulls the blaring smoke alarm off the wall.

SHELLY

I'm trying to leave an important message!!

She runs to the bathroom. The phone cord stretches.

INT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Shelly chucks the smoke alarm into the toilet, closes the lid, the phone cord stretched to its limit.

INT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Shelly gets out of the bathroom, slides down the hallway wall, sitting on the floor.

ANSWERING MACHINE VOICE

To erase and re-record, press
three.

Shelly punches anything on her phone.

ANSWERING MACHINE VOICE (CONT'D)

Message sent!

SHELLY

Nooooo!

(sighs, then)

C'est la vie...

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Shelly and Mary-Anne sit at their stations putting on their makeup. Jodie, stretching, is already done with hers.

JODIE

I went to a dance call today.

SHELLY

You did? Already?

MARY-ANNE

What'd you go out for?

JODIE

Um, it was this show called
Hedonist Paradise?

SHELLY

Ugh, I can't believe that's the
title of a show.

MARY-ANNE

What, like *Le Razzle Dazzle* is
better?

SHELLY

Le Razzle Dazzle is a name that is
evocative of-- of another time in
history, of Paris, of the theater
in a way--

MARY-ANNE

You get all that from *Le Razzle Dazzle*?

SHELLY

Well what do you get from "Hedonist Paradise"? I get girls grinding on poles, doused in water-- like animals--just totally tasteless--

MARY-ANNE

Tasteless--

SHELLY

Yes!

MARY-ANNE

I can't have this conversation again--

SHELLY

Well, Mary-Anne, you think it's so terrible, why are you here? Why did you want this job in the first place you think it's so tasteless?

MARY-ANNE

Because it's a job! It pays in *American dollars*.

(then)

I don't know.

This hangs in the air...

JODIE

You wanna see the combination?

MARY-ANNE

Sure.

Jodie adjusts her chair.

SHELLY

Oh there's a chair involved.

JODIE

Okay so you're backward on the chair and then you're like:
(she talk-sings to a tune
akin to S&M by Rihanna)
"A git it git it come on." Slap thighs, up the body, through the hair, hold. And one two three four, and ass ass uh-uh.

(MORE)

JODIE (CONT'D)
 (she rolls her head
 backwards left to right
 with her shoulders.)
 Duhn duhn duhn duhn da-da daa.
 (she slaps her butt.)

Shelly hates this. Mary-Anne rolls her eyes.

SHELLY
 This is ridiculous.

JODIE
 And body roll, body roll, then you
 get up, and pose.

She struts around the chair.

JODIE (CONT'D)
 And butt and butt *hip*, then down
 the leg, and up and up, and *duhn*.

She stops facing the chair and then dives down, kicking her
 legs out behind her, nose first into the seat of the chair
 and body-rolls up.

JODIE (CONT'D)
 And hump the chair uh-uh-uh-uh-

SHELLY
 Stop stop please. I can't, I can't--
 sweetie-- this is-- it's just-- I
 would NEVER audition for that show.
 NEVER.

Jodie stops, looks at Shelly like she just got caught
 masturbating.

SHELLY (CONT'D)
 Sorry sweetie.

JODIE
 It's okay.

SHELLY
 Never.

JODIE
 (ashamed)
 Okay.

SHELLY
 You know, how am I supposed to
 react??

(MORE)

SHELLY (CONT'D)

...I don't even know what I'm gonna do for Christmas if I don't have this...

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. EDDIE'S OFFICE - LATER

Shelly enters. Eddie, behind his desk, has a stack of envelopes in front of him.

EDDIE

Oh hey, Shell--

He hands her a paycheck envelope.

SHELLY

Thanks.

(opening it)

Since we lost those shows, these checks feel like they're getting slimmer and slimmer, you know?

EDDIE

Yeah.

Shelly looks at the check, concerned. Eddie heads out.

SHELLY

Hey Eddie? Are you sure this is right? It's less than I thought it would be.

EDDIE

Well it's less because less shows.

SHELLY

(checking her irritation)

Well, I know that, obviously, but I thought it would just be eight hundred divided by eleven shows a week, minus the three shows we lost.

EDDIE

You might have been making slightly more for the ones we lost cuz those shows were better sold. Generally.

SHELLY

Oh.

EDDIE

If you want I can check with accounts payable?

SHELLY

Nah, it's okay. They're not gonna do anything about it, right?

EDDIE

Probably...

Shelly looks at the check again.

SHELLY

I had just... I had done the math and kinda re-worked my budget according to what I thought it was gonna be... Organic milk is so expensive--

(off the check)

Oh... they docked me for the wing.

EDDIE

Oh--

SHELLY

The rip--

EDDIE

Shit--

SHELLY

I guess it was harder to fix than... It wasn't on a seam so--

EDDIE

Yeah I think Ida had to re-order the fabric.

SHELLY

Oh, she did?

EDDIE

Yeah, just to repair one wing, you know-- and now the show's gonna end so it's--

SHELLY

Sure, no I get it--

EDDIE

They're never gonna need that fabric again, you know, for anything else--

SHELLY

Right-- I'm sorry.

EDDIE

Shouldn't be sorry, it came out of
your paycheck.

SHELLY

Well then... well I'm sorry to me
then...

Shelly smiles, takes a breath, leaves.

INT. HOTEL. CASINO FLOOR - DAY

Shelly, in plain clothes, walks with Annette, in her
cocktailing uniform, carrying a tray of drinks.

ANNETTE

I could move in with you and pay
you rent--

SHELLY

No--

ANNETTE

I could! My lease is up in like ten
months--

SHELLY

You're gonna gamble it all, I know
you. And then I'm gonna lose my
house, just like you lost yours--

They pass PHYLLIS (80's) at the nickel slots, dressed in a
ratty white fur wrap with costume jewelry and elaborate make
up, with her hair in a high, frothy bun.

ANNETTE

Phyllis, you want another ginger
ale?

PHYLLIS

Yes, honey.

ANNETTE

You want some Jack Daniels in it?

PHYLLIS

Oh, yes honey.

Annette and Shelly move on.

ANNETTE

I'm not irresponsible, Shell, I'm
thinking about opening an IRA--

SHELLY

I think you're too old to open an IRA.

ANNETTE

Whatever. I make money, you know.

At a poker table, FOUR GUYS TOTALLY IGNORE THEM as Annette sets down their drinks. She and Shelly continue on.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

Hey, you could always get together with Eddie.

SHELLY

What?! That's a first--

ANNETTE

I'm not kidding--

At the bar, the bartender, ANTHONY (30's) mixes drinks.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

Lemme get a Jack and ginger.

ANTHONY

Cutting the floor, Annette-- You and Esme, you two can go home.

ANNETTE

Who's staying?

ANTHONY

Jennifer and Jessica.

We see JENNIFER and JESSICA-- they're not that young. They're like 40. But they're younger than Annette and Esme.

ANNETTE

(this bullshit)

Got it.

(re: the jack and ginger)

You wanna tell one of them to deliver that to Zsa Zsa Gabor over in the nickel slots?

ANTHONY

Who?

Annette and Shelly roll their eyes.

SHELLY

Zsa-Zsa!

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL. LADIES LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Annette changes out of her uniform as Shelly leans against a row of lockers. It's dingy and scummy like a high school locker room and the vibe is totally different than the dressing rooms at Le Razzle Dazzle.

ANNETTE

I think you want a man around the house. You date these business guys in town for like two nights max at a time-- cooking for them like you want to get married--

SHELLY

I don't! I don't want to get married.

ANNETTE

I think you forget that guys come to Vegas to get a story to go home with, you know what I mean? Like, shtupping a showgirl--

SHELLY

Oh my god, Annette!

ANNETTE

You know that. But Eddie lives here, you two have a history--

SHELLY

We have a bad history.

ANNETTE

Look, all histories with men are bad, right? I dunno, he's a solid enough guy though. He has a pension. Do you have a pension?

SHELLY

...I don't have a pension.

ANNETTE

Exactly.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)
 ...I could always help get you a
 job here.

SHELLY
 What, cocktailing?

ANNETTE
 Yeah.

Shelly can barely hide that this would be her nightmare.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)
 Good night, Esme! Hey fuck them,
 right? Fuck 'em. Screw 'em.

Shelly clocks ESME RODRIGUEZ, 80's, in her short cocktailing
 uniform, tights and red lipstick, changing at a snail's pace.
 She is absolutely ancient.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)
 (to Shelly)
 Hey, you want a cigarette?

EXT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. FRONT STOOP - DAY

Shelly parks in her driveway. She grabs groceries out of the
 back seat, and notices HANNAH (22) sitting on her stoop,
 picking at her nail polish. Shelly's in disbelief.

SHELLY
 Oh my god.

Hannah looks up, sees Shelly.

SHELLY (CONT'D)
 Oh my god, is that you?

HANNAH
 Hey Shelly.

Shelly hugs Hannah.

SHELLY
 You got my message! Oh it's so good
 to see you! Oh my goodness! What
 are you doing here??

SHELLY (CONT'D)

Not that I'm-- you know, you can
show up on my doorstep any time,
any day, anytime, I just-- I'm just
so glad you're here!

She hugs Hannah again.

INT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Shelly buzzes around the kitchen, making lemonade from a few
packets of Crystal Light. Hannah stands to the side.

SHELLY

Why aren't you at school?

HANNAH

I had to come home for Lisa's
birthday so--

SHELLY

Oh, it's Lisa's birthday! I'll have
to send her a card, or call--

HANNAH

You don't have to do that--

SHELLY

No, I will, I want to. How's she?
How are she and Jeff?

HANNAH

They're really good. I'm graduating
in May--

SHELLY

I know! Oh hon, you're graduating
so soon, I just-- oh I can't
believe it!

HANNAH

And Becky's graduating too so we're
gonna do like, a joint party--

SHELLY

Oh Becky's graduating too! Oh
that's so good-- good for her, good
for Becky!

Shelly hands Hannah the lemonade.

HANNAH

Yeah, it's a lot of family time, so I wanted to get out of the house anyway...

Hannah drinks. Shelly takes in her daughter.

SHELLY

...You look so beautiful, honey.

HANNAH

Noooo...

SHELLY

You do. You look so beautiful, so grown up. I just can't believe I haven't seen you in what, a year?

HANNAH

Yeah...

A moment.

SHELLY

So... do you have a boyfriend?

HANNAH

No, just trying to focus on getting out of school.

SHELLY

Okay. Oh well. ...Plenty of time for boyfriends! You know, later.

It's awkward.

SHELLY (CONT'D)

Have you declared a major?

HANNAH

I'm studying photography.

SHELLY

Oh that's so exciting--!

HANNAH

Thanks. Lisa said it wouldn't be that useful to have any kind of art degree but... it's the only thing I really care about so...

SHELLY

Well I think it's brilliant that you're doing that. Being part of a creative community, it's the best.

HANNAH

It's pretty solitary, it's not really a community.

SHELLY

Well being an artist is solitary. But if you're passionate about it, it's worth it.

This doesn't sit well with Hannah.

HANNAH

You know what...? I should get going...

SHELLY

Oh no-- I was just about to say that you should stay for dinner--

HANNAH

I just wanted to drop by and say hello-- I have to get-- have to get home for dinner...

SHELLY

You could just call them and say you're eating with me tonight, couldn't you? It's just one night.

HANNAH

I dunno, Becky just got home...

SHELLY

Lisa wouldn't mind, would she? Just one dinner-- just one night?

HANNAH

(slightly firmer)
I really can't, Shelly.

EXT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. FRONT STOOP - MOMENTS LATER

Shelly walks Hannah to the curb.

SHELLY

I was thinking, that since the show is closing, I could probably get a couple days off and come visit you in Tucson.

HANNAH

What?

SHELLY

Oh the show-- it's closing. Can't talk about it too much, I'll just dissolve into tears. But you know I'll finally have some time to maybe come visit. Could come to your graduation. If you want.

HANNAH

...I'll think about it.

SHELLY

Okay. Come here, give your mom a hug.

Hannah does. They hug. Unsure of what else she can say:

SHELLY (CONT'D)

You know, if you ever want to come see the show--

HANNAH

What?

SHELLY

(backtracking)
Sorry, I didn't mean-

She stops herself.

SHELLY (CONT'D)

It's just so good to see you I was just... trying to figure out how to see you again soon.
(uncomfortable)
Little misstep...

HANNAH

It's okay. ...See you, Shelly.

Shelly watches Hannah go, frustrated at their disconnect.

INT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Shelly, in sweat pants over a leotard, dances in her living room along with a dance sequence from the documentary, AFTERNOON OF A FAUN, (about Balanchine and his fourth wife, Tannequile LeClerq, a brilliant principal with the NYC Ballet before becoming paralyzed from Polio at age 27, destroying her dancing career.)

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE THEATER - NIGHT

Jodie, in the audience, laughs hysterically at a funny, sexy FEMALE PLATE SPINNER as she spins multiple plates on sticks in front of the curtain.

Her grand finale: She sits on a chair, straddles her legs and inserts a stick into her vagina. She spins a plate on it, and... orgasms. TAH DAH!

Everyone shrieks and cheers. Including Jodie.

CUT TO:

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. DRESSING ROOM - LATER

Jodie puts on her make-up as Shelly, in her street clothes enters with her dance bag.

SHELLY

You'd think they could get our set in place *before* our call time, so we can warm up like normal, you know? They've got every guy on our crew out there--

JODIE

I saw it.

SHELLY

You did?

JODIE

Yeah. It was pretty awesome.

SHELLY

Awesome? The dirty circus was awesome?

JODIE

It was really funny--

SHELLY

Uh-huh?

JODIE

And the acts were really hard and impressive.

SHELLY

Sounds like every other circus.

JODIE

I've never seen a circus like that.

SHELLY

And that made it awesome?

JODIE

I mean, yeah...

Mary-Anne enters, pissed.

MARY-ANNE

Got turned down for three shows--

SHELLY

What?

JODIE

Which ones?

MARY-ANNE

I *look too old* for Jungle whatever-- Hedonist Jungle Paradise Island whatever the fuck-- "*look too old,*" like they are *absolutely* looking for girls who are barely eighteen-- like they're like "*did you turn 18 yesterday--*"

JODIE

And what were the others?

MARY-ANNE

I'm not stacked enough for Oz Land or Pin Up Gals.

SHELLY

Sweetie, you don't even want those shows, they're so bad, they're low class--

MARY-ANNE

Low class?? What is this??

SHELLY

This show-- *this* was a famous show,
it was a *tradition* that had it's
roots in France--!

MARY-ANNE

Ohmygod, fucking *France* man!

SHELLY

It's true! This show is the last
remaining descendent of 1830's
Parisian lido culture and that is--
it is *history*!

MARY-ANNE

Nobody knows what that means,
Shelly!

SHELLY

And just like the shows in Paris--
you know, we think 85 is a big
cast, but there were 160 of us back
in the '80's! American Express did
a travel campaign in -- in '87 or
'88, and we were flown all over the
world and photographed in different
sites-- They shot me on the *Great
Wall of China*-- *I was very
special!!*

MARY-ANNE

I'm sure. Super special, Shelly.

SHELLY

Vegas treated us like movie stars?
The Iconic American Show Girl. The
Las Vegas Showgirl. We were
ambassadors, we represented
elegance and grace, we had *status*,
It was a real *legacy*, and it still
is! I mean, these costumes-- they
make you feel like you're stepping
out of the pages of *Vogue* magazine.
I think that's why *women* come to
see the show-- I think the glamour
is undeniable.

MARY-ANNE

I think the glamour-- I can kinda
deny the glamour--

SHELLY

Maybe times have just changed but--

MARY-ANNE

THEY HAVE. Yes. Shell. Times are brand spanking different.

INT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Shelly, wearing readers, looks through CLASSIFIED ADS in a local paper.

CUT TO:

INT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Shelly lays on her couch watching the 1929 movie GLORIFYING THE AMERICAN GIRL. The doorbell rings.

INT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Shelly opens the door. It's Hannah. Shelly screams in delight. She almost cries. Hugs Hannah to her.

SHELLY

Oh my god, Hannah! What a nice surprise! Come on in! What are you doing here?

HANNAH

I just thought we could have that dinner.

INT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. DINING ROOM - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Shelly and Hannah eat out of Chinese food cartons.

SHELLY

So, what's the plan after graduation?

HANNAH

I think maybe I'll save some more money and then, I dunno... I kind of want to just travel around. I really want to go to Europe but...

SHELLY

Oh wow, that would be amazing. You've gotta do that.

HANNAH

It's just expensive. And being a
photographer is just... it's hard.

SHELLY

What??

HANNAH

It's a hard career path.

SHELLY

Says who??

HANNAH

Like, everybody.

SHELLY

Yeah but did someone say "Oh that's
hard. Being an artist, that's
really *hard*." Did someone put that
dumb sentence into your head?

HANNAH

Um yeah, Lisa, for one.
(off Shelly, holding her
tongue)

That's what parents do when they
want you to get a job that like,
pays money.

SHELLY

Well, she's not your actual parent,
she may think she is, but working
at a job that you don't really
love, *that's* hard. When you know
your calling is out there waiting
for you. Money doesn't make a
boring job *that* much better. What
does Lisa want you to do?

HANNAH

She thinks I'd be great at like,
graphic design.

SHELLY

Does that interest you right now?

HANNAH

No.

SHELLY

Then forget about it!

(scoffing)

(MORE)

SHELLY (CONT'D)
"It's hard." That is the *dumbest*
phrase anyone ever told anyone with
a dream.

Shelly puts her hand over Hannah's.

SHELLY (CONT'D)
I'll meet you in Paris.

Hannah smiles at Shelly. She appreciates the support and how
easy it is for Shelly to fantasize. Shelly smiles back. Then...

SHELLY (CONT'D)
Oh my god, what was that?

HANNAH
What?

SHELLY
I just saw something scurry across
the floor.

HANNAH
Are you sure? What, like a mouse??

Shelly screams! Hannah laughs like this is a game they used
to play when she was a child.

SHELLY
Yes! There it is again!!

HANNAH
What!!

SHELLY
They live in the hidey-holes the
gangsters who lived here before me
used to keep their money in! I wish
I knew where it was!

Hannah laughs.

SHELLY (CONT'D)
There it is again!!

Shelly jumps up on the chair. Hannah jumps on her chair now
too, screaming and laughing.

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Mid-performance, Eddie calls the show.

EDDIE

(in his headset)

Go cue 68. Going to blackout.

Standby for 70, 71--

(then, to anyone in
earshot)

Can we get dancers in their places
before, I don't know, before hell
freezes over? Thank you.

A few dancers rush past him.

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. DRESSING ROOM - LATER

After the show, Shelly is alone in the dressing room. She wears headphones and is marking through a dance. A KNOCK at the dressing room door. It's Hannah.

HANNAH

Hi.

Shelly, startled, takes off her earphones.

SHELLY

Oh! Hey sweetie, oh my gosh.

HANNAH

I saw the show tonight.

SHELLY

Oh, you did. That's so sweet, that
means a lot to me that you came.

HANNAH

I wasn't sure if I was even gonna
tell you... there was barely anyone
there.

SHELLY

(making light but nervous)

Yeah, that was maybe the worst
house we've ever had in the history
of the whole entire show. There
were only what, like eighteen
people out there? If I'd've known
you were here I would have done a
special little shout out or point
or something--

HANNAH

Yeah, it's okay.

SHELLY

I thought you were just going back
to the Kelly's...

(trying to shift the
energy)

So, what'd you think?

HANNAH

I think I thought it would be
different...

SHELLY

Oh yeah...?

HANNAH

Yeah, like harder dancing or
something...?

SHELLY

Oh, we just make it look easy--

HANNAH

...It's kinda just a stupid nudie
show...

SHELLY

It's a classic *spectacle* with--
with dancing nudes, but it's
certainly not a "nudie show."

HANNAH

"Dancing nudes?" Is that like, a
technical term?

SHELLY

Yes. Yes, it is.

HANNAH

(trying to make sense of
it but spinning a little)

What is the point of that show? What
was that? And why did you invite me?
Maybe you thought I wouldn't come? Or
I don't know-- I don't know why I *did*
come-- although I guess it's because
I just *hoped*-- I just wanted to know
that it was worth it. That it was
better than me after all.

SHELLY

What??

HANNAH

That you didn't put this lame trash
above me--

SHELLY

It's not-- I disagree-- and plus, I
didn't put anything above you. I
provided for you--

HANNAH

I keep forgetting that you're not
actually a reasonable person: that
you left me in the casino parking
lot with a *Gameboy* while you did
two shows a night.

SHELLY

I didn't think it was appropriate
for you backstage--

HANNAH

It wasn't!!

SHELLY

I couldn't afford help, Hannah--

HANNAH

You are so lucky that when Lisa saw
me in the car, she didn't turn me
in to child services.

Shelly is gut punched by this.

SHELLY

I-- I-- was doing my best, I know--
I was just doing my best, Hannah--
if you can actually do what you
love for thirty years, if you are
fortunate enough to be passionate
about *your* career--

HANNAH

Career?!! What kind of career is
this?? You're in the goddamn back
of 80 topless dancers! *This* was
worth missing bedtime for most of
my childhood?? ...Was it?

Shelly is stunned silent.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

See, this is why I came tonight. I always wanted to see a reason in all of this and tonight I finally *didn't*.

Shelly can't handle being confronted like this. She grabs her bag, and heads for the door.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Shelly--

SHELLY

I'm so sorry, Hannah. I am so sorry that you didn't get what you wanted from me. If you can forgive me? Anytime? Anytime in your life? I would love that. But I can't defend myself anymore, I just can't.

She runs out, leaving Hannah devastated as the door closes behind her. Hannah takes a moment to process and compose herself. She glances around the dressing room and notices the old photo of herself and Shelly taped to Shelly's mirror. She takes it down and looks at it.

Eddie opens the door halfway and shuts the lights off.

HANNAH

Hey-- I'm still here--

EDDIE

Oh hey, sorry. Thought I saw Shelly go...

Eddie realizes that it's Hannah standing in front of him.

HANNAH

Um-- I'm going-- sorry.

She tapes the photo back to the mirror.

EDDIE

It's okay. Are you... Hannah?

HANNAH

Yeah-- I know I probably shouldn't be back here--

EDDIE

You came to see the show?

HANNAH

Um... yeah.

EDDIE
What'd you think?

HANNAH
Not really my thing...

EDDIE
She talks about you all the time.

Hannah looks at him.

HANNAH
Yeah. ...I think I should get going.

Hannah starts for the door.

EDDIE
Yeah. Sorry to keep you. It's just...

A moment.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
(very sweet and paternal)
It's good seeing you.

HANNAH
You too.

After a second, Hannah leaves.

INT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Shelly practices her dance, making notes. The doorbell RINGS.

Shelly opens the door, and standing there is Jodie, looking miserable and fragile. Shelly's immediately on edge.

SHELLY
Hey sweetie. What are you doing here?

JODIE
I just... I just wanted to come over...?

SHELLY
Okay...

JODIE
Can I come in?

SHELLY

Is everything okay? It's just not a good time right now.

JODIE

It's just-- my mom-- She won't answer my calls-- and I want to talk to her?

SHELLY

Your mom's just sad that you left like that. You left.

JODIE

(surprised by Shelly's lack of care)

I know but I still want to talk to her--

SHELLY

You know what, it's just a bad time right now--

JODIE

Shelly, I'm really scared-- I didn't know I could never go back--

SHELLY

I CAN'T SEE YOU RIGHT NOW! I need you to go, I need to be alone, I'm doing something!

Shelly shuts the door hard in Jodie's face. Looking like she's about to crumble, Jodie backs up and walks away.

EXT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. ROOFTOP - EVENING

Shelly, in full costume and make-up, is on her phone. The feathers and rhinestones of her costume, her enormous fake eyelashes, caked on foundation, and crusty red lipstick-- all still strikingly contrary to the sky and purple mountains behind her.

SHELLY

I just wanted to call you-- I want to talk to you-- I can't believe I left the way I did the other night, I just feel so terrible.

(MORE)

SHELLY (CONT'D)

I don't know how I could do that--
 I don't know how I could do
 anything I've done-- I don't know
 how I missed out on-- on our life
 together and I just-- I don't want
 to leave it on-- on a *phone*
message, you know, I'd really like
 to talk to you if you'd please,
please, please, please, please,
please, please, please, please,
please, please... please call me
 back...

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. DRESSING ROOM - LATER

Mary-Anne, Jodie and the other dancers mid-fast-costume-
 change. Shelly enters last.

SHELLY

Is this the worst audience ever?? I
 just want to yell at them: WAKE UP!
 This is a LIVE PERFORMANCE! What is
 this boring? It's breasts and
 rhinestones and joy!

JODIE

How did you do this before I was
 here? For thirty years-- how did
 you make all your quick changes??

SHELLY

I'm so glad you feel so necessary
 here, Jodie-- that's good. That's
 important.

JODIE

(re: the music)

Do you hear where we're at?

They listen to the monitor-- it's like ridiculous climactic
 movie music. Shelly starts changing.

SHELLY

Can you help me with my necklace?

JODIE

No, I want to see you get ready by
 yourself. I want to see what would
 happen to you if I didn't help.

SHELLY

Oh god, okay, fine. Look.

While they change, Shelly checks in periodically with the music, listening for where it is.

MARY-ANNE

Well now you're stressing *me* out.

JODIE

Good. You're always behind too.

MARY-ANNE

That's bullshit.

JODIE

Well, good luck.

MARY-ANNE

We have plenty of time, I'm not actually worried about this.

SHELLY

I'm slightly concerned-- with the wings it's gonna be a little tight--

MARY-ANNE

Just keep going-- stop *talking*--

SHELLY

Well my god, stop yelling at me, I'm gonna get anxious!

MARY-ANNE

I'm not even yelling!

Jodie buckles her shoes and clips on her earrings, ready. Mary-Anne searches for something on her dressing table.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

Where're my clip-ons?!

JODIE

I dunno...

MARY-ANNE

Did you take them??

JODIE

No.

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Shelly carries her wings and clip-on earrings as she, Jodie and Mary-Anne head for the stage.

SHELLY
Will you just *help me* with my damn wings??

JODIE
Nope.

SHELLY
You should have thought of this pointless challenge before the show, so I was ready for it.

JODIE
Well here's your warning for tomorrow.

SHELLY
Yeah, thanks a lot!

JODIE
This is good, this is character building.

SHELLY
Just what I need, a lesson about character from a *nineteen year old*.

They scurry up the stairs.

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jodie and Mary-Anne hustle up the stairs. Shelly appears behind them, her wings ON!!

SHELLY
(victorious)
I got it!!! Haha!!

MARY-ANNE
(at Jodie)
HA!

SHELLY (CONT'D)
(at Jodie)
See??

JODIE
(mad that Shelly could do it without her)
Good!! I'm glad you can get into your costumes alone--

MARY-ANNE
Shelly come on!

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

But just as Shelly runs through the door, the wing catches on the infamous DOOR HANDLE and RIPS.

SHELLY
Ohhh!!! Oh noooo!

Jodie looks back, instantly guilty, seeing that Shelly isn't going on with them as she crumbles to the floor, looking at her ripped wing like it's a dying child.

MARY-ANNE
...Jodie, we have to go.

Mary-Anne shoves Jodie as they head for the stage.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)
You're a real asshole, you know that?

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. DRESSING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Shelly is alone in the dressing room after the show, sewing up the ripped wing. Eddie comes in.

EDDIE
You want me to have Ida take a look at that?

SHELLY
No, God no, they'll dock me again.

EDDIE
How long you think you're gonna be?

SHELLY
I dunno... Not that long...

EDDIE
It doesn't have to be perfect-- only a few shows left.

He sits down at a dressing station. Shelly continues sewing.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
You know, I've been thinking that, for you more than anyone, the end of the show might be kinda upsetting...

SHELLY
Yeah...

EDDIE
You know what's next?

SHELLY
...No... You?

EDDIE
I'm staying on. Work with the
circus.

SHELLY
Oh right-- full schedule.

EDDIE
With the circus. Yeah.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
It's a much easier gig for the
money than the R.D. so that's good.

SHELLY
That's so lucky. And you'll still
be contributing to your pension,
getting health insurance?

EDDIE
Yeah. Anyway, just wanted to check
on you.

He heads for the door but then turns back to her.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
And... if it means anything,...
you're a real legend, Shell.

Shelly smiles, she appreciates this as bittersweet as it is.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
...Okay.

He turns to leave again.

SHELLY
Hey Eddie?

He turns back.

EDDIE
Yeah.

SHELLY
Do you want to have dinner with me
one night this week?

EDDIE

Do you want to have dinner with me?

SHELLY

Yeah.

EDDIE

Sure. Yeah, of course. That'd be nice.

SHELLY

Okay!

EDDIE

Okay.

SHELLY (CONT'D)

Great.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Okay.

Eddie exits, leaving Shelly alone.

INT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. SHELLY'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Shelly tries on a dress. Looks in the mirror. Takes it off and puts another one on. Looks in the mirror. Cocks her head, unsure.

INT. NICE RESTAURANT. BOOTH - NIGHT

Eddie, cleaned up and looking like he's made an effort, waits. Shelly arrives. She looks great.

SHELLY

Hi, I'm here, Hi Eddie.

An awkward cheek kiss.

SHELLY (CONT'D)

Sorry I'm a little late--

EDDIE

No, you're not--

SHELLY

I was debating dresses-- but I shouldn't tell you that--

EDDIE

Oh--

SHELLY

Funny story: I didn't have time to get my nails done so I went to the drug store and right next to my nail files:

(she holds up a box of Stetson)

Your favorite, right?

EDDIE

Thank you, that's so thoughtful.

She smiles. He does too.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I don't have anything for you.

SHELLY

That's okay. You look nice.

EDDIE

Thank you.

Shelly smooths her dress, hoping perhaps he'll pay her a compliment.

SHELLY

Do... I look nice?

EDDIE

Oh yes, sorry--

(then, genuine)

You look really beautiful tonight.

SHELLY

Thanks.

EDDIE

You always look beautiful though.

SHELLY

Aw, thanks Eddie.

EDDIE

But it's rare I see you in an actual dress and you know, not in like a rhinestone *bustier* with your breasts... you know... hanging out.

SHELLY

Well. I wouldn't say *hanging*.

EDDIE

You do though-- you look really pretty even all covered up.

SHELLY

...Maybe we should order.

CUT TO:

INT. NICE RESTAURANT. BOOTH - LATER

Shelly pushes chicken around her plate while Eddie eats a steak.

EDDIE

How's Hannah?

SHELLY

She's about to finish up school--

EDDIE

I wondered for such a long time, where she was and what she was up to, and... and if she looks at all like me--

SHELLY

(with a smile)
She doesn't--

EDDIE

I know, thank God.

SHELLY

What?

EDDIE

What.

SHELLY

What did you say?

EDDIE

Well I ...I met her--

SHELLY

What??

EDDIE

In your dressing room the other night.

SHELLY

Oh-- What did you-- you introduced yourself?? You *met* her??

EDDIE

No, I mean, I didn't say who I was--

SHELLY

Thank God--

EDDIE

Does she still live with the Kelly's?

SHELLY

--She lives-- at college.

EDDIE

I thought that was just going to be a temporary solution.

SHELLY

You're not in her life so I don't see how it's any of your business.

EDDIE

I'm just curious.

SHELLY

She was best friends with Becky and Theo, and Lisa had all the time in the world to devote to her kids, so, you know--

EDDIE

You couldn't have gotten a sitter?

SHELLY

I made it work, that's all that matters--

EDDIE

Or I was thinking... you could'a gotten job where you worked when she was at school. You didn't have to stay with the show.

SHELLY

Of course I did!

EDDIE

You could have worked at a supermarket, waited tables, worked retail--

SHELLY

I can't win-- *cannot* just be right in the choices I made! God, this is what women have to deal with. You know, all the time, we're told: do the thing you didn't want to do, take the road you chose not to take! Jesus, and how are you saying all this when really-- you were never there? Where were you?

EDDIE

We weren't even in a relationship...

SHELLY

Well what do you want now? You want to be her father now all of a sudden?

EDDIE

No--

SHELLY

What do you want with me, Eddie??

EDDIE

I just want to to be your friend.

SHELLY

Oh God, this is so embarrassing. I have to go. My *friend*?? This was a bad idea. This was *the worst fucken idea--!*

She gets up to leave, RESTAURANT GUESTS around them start taking notice of the argument.

EDDIE

Shelly, wait--

SHELLY

Like you're in a position to judge *me*-- You think that's what a *friend* does??

EDDIE

I didn't mean to sound like that--

SHELLY

I should have been in *retail*?? I love the show! I love it. I feel so good about myself in the show.

((MORE))

SHELLY (CONT'D)

You and Hannah and *Mary-Anne* don't understand, but the costumes, the sets, being on that stage and feeling what I *feel* just bathed in those lights *every single night... Feeling seen. Feeling beautiful.* That is powerful and I can't imagine my life without it. And I think it's *wild* that *I'm* the one out there on stage, that *I'm* the one people come for, that *I'm* the one on the *poster!* And you're-- *you, Eddie,* are going on to this show or that show and the producers will place you elsewhere, *no problem,* because you know how to read a lighting cue-- you just tell someone to push a damn button-- that you're gonna be *just fine.* And I... I just have to disappear. ...But you know what?? I have no regrets. None. Eat your meat!

Shelly runs out.

INT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Annette pours some whiskey into a pair of glasses. Shelly's cleaned up from her date but has been crying.

ANNETTE

You know, when my grandparents, Pearl and Bob, retired from the stationary business, they drove around the Southwest doing square dancing competitions. We should do that. You and me.

SHELLY

I thought you weren't gonna retire.

ANNETTE

We could get the flouncy skirts. Get some turquoise...

SHELLY

Uh-huh.

Shelly laughs a little, then takes a sip and sighs.

ANNETTE

Hey... I fucked up a little.

Shelly knows what this means.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

I lost my shirt...

Shelly looks at her.

SHELLY

What are you gonna do...?

ANNETTE

I don't know... I don't know what to do... Can I... you think maybe I could... maybe I-- this is-- ahh--

(she laughs,
uncomfortable)

Can I-- fuck, I don't know why I'm laughing, I don't know why this is so hard to ask for-- I just-- I guess- I don't know how to fucken-- I can't even fucking ask you--

SHELLY

You need to stay here?

ANNETTE

I tried to just work night shifts, shower in the locker room--

SHELLY

What??

ANNETTE

It's been a week--

SHELLY

Ohmygod, Annette, no no-- no you can stay.

ANNETTE

I'm sorry.

SHELLY

I know...

ANNETTE

I'll save enough and get out of your hair so fast--

SHELLY

It's okay--

ANNETTE

Fuck.

SHELLY

It's... no... it's okay...

They hold each other.

INT. SHELLY'S HOUSE. SHELLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Shelly sits on her bed. We join her mid phone message to Hannah.

SHELLY

I read somewhere: Our mothers are not saints or saviors, just regular people doing the best they can with the tools they have. I know that's not an excuse but I really just want you to know that... I love you... however imperfect that may sound. I just want you to always know that. You know, life is full of contradictions. And this probably sounds crazy, but I've always only wanted the best for you. I've always been with you. I've always just wanted you to be safe and happy. And I just want you to follow your dreams. Just be you. I love you.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THEATER. POWDER ROOM- DAY

Shelly changes into her dance clothes. She pins a number onto her leotard.

INT. THEATER. HOLDING ROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Shelly finds a seat amongst a spattering of alternative PERFORMERS. She passes a jaded looking sword swallower, polishing her sword, tatted up contortionists stretching, a group of men wearing puppet costumes, bored, looking at their smartphones, a Russian couple in roller skates. It's the stuff of freak shows. The LEAST GLAMOROUS scene ever.

In the corner, Mary-Anne ducks out of Shelly's view.

An audition check-in girl, SCARLETT, enters with a clipboard.

SCARLETT

If you are a Capricorn or an
Aquarius line up and follow me!

INT. THEATER. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Recorded LATIN MUSIC PLAYS from the stage as Scarlett directs Shelly to wait in the wing for her turn.

From the wing, Shelly watches the ACT ON STAGE: a pair of prodigy level NINE-YEAR-OLD DANCERS-- a boy and a girl in flashy, skimpy costumes.

PRE LAP:

DIRECTOR

(over a God mic)

What's your name?

INT. STAGE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Shelly stands alone on the bare stage. A DIRECTOR sits in the house, mostly obscured by darkness.

SHELLY

Shelly Gard--

DIRECTOR

Just need the first name.

SHELLY

Sorry.

DIRECTOR

How tall are you?

SHELLY

5'7?

DIRECTOR

Age?

SHELLY

A gentleman never asks a lady...
her age-- 36?

A pause.

SHELLY (CONT'D)

Sorry-- I lied-- I'm...

(lying again)

(MORE)

SHELLY (CONT'D)

42. But this house is big.
Distance... helps...

A pause.

SHELLY (CONT'D)

Sorry, I'm so nervous! I've been in
Le Razzle Dazzle for a very long
time so this is-- I haven't
auditioned in a while... But it's
exciting!

DIRECTOR

You have an act prepared?

SHELLY

I do. I'm a dancer.

DIRECTOR

Music?

SHELLY

I gave it to...
(she looks to an off
screen sound guy)
The maestro.

DIRECTOR

Okay.

SHELLY

...Okay.

SHADOWS OF THE NIGHT by Pat Benatar plays and Shelly begins dancing. This is the interpretive dance she's been rehearsing at home and in the dressing room. We finally see how passionate Shelly is when she's dancing even though her technique is not great.

Shelly pours her heart out on the stage, leaving everything she's got on the dance floor. She's dancing from her heart and living in and for this moment, her artist soul soaring with self-expression. This is Shelly's Moment.

The dance ends and Shelly feels triumphant. She's breathing hard, proud of herself. She's done just what she came to do.

DIRECTOR

Okay, thank you.

Shelly's smile fades.

SHELLY

Wait-- that's it?

DIRECTOR
Yeah, we get the idea. Thanks for
coming in, Sherry.

SHELLY
Shelly.

Dejected, she starts heading off stage. Then turns back.

SHELLY (CONT'D)
You didn't like it?

DIRECTOR
It's not what we're looking for.

SHELLY
...What are you looking for?

DIRECTOR
Just a different vibe.

SHELLY
Like what? Like-- I actually have
a very versatile background--

DIRECTOR
I thought you said you've been with
Le Razzle Dazzle for--

SHELLY
Before that-- Just please just tell
me what you're interested in and
I'll give it to you.

DIRECTOR
Um--

SHELLY
You're looking for dancers, I'm a
dancer, I'm an experienced dancer!

DIRECTOR
We're looking for dance acts that
are either... somewhat acrobatic
or... sexy.

SHELLY
Okay-- alright-- I can do that--
How about like a Salome dance of
the seven veils kind of thing? Is
that the kind of thing you'd be
interested in?

DIRECTOR

It's gonna be a no for today.

SHELLY

Oh come on!! You can just dismiss a person like this! This is how it works??

DIRECTOR

This is how auditioning works, yes--

SHELLY

Hey, please, I worked really hard--

DIRECTOR

Look, if you were a really good dancer, it might be different, but your technique isn't great. You were obviously hired for Le Razzle Dazzle because you were beautiful and young, not because you were a brilliant dancer. I mean, that's not news, is it? If you had great training, if you had been with a company in New York, maybe you'd have more of an argument here, but you've been in that show for how long? They hired you because you were young and sexy. I don't know how to help you if you don't understand that's not what you're selling anymore.

Shelly doesn't know how to respond.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Thank you for coming in. Next!!

In the wings, Mary-Anne, who's heard the whole thing, watches, unsure what to do.

Shelly defiantly starts doing a dance that's like the one Jodie did in her Hedonist Paradise audition.

SHELLY

Is this what you're looking for??
Is this sexy enough for you?? Is
this what young and sexy girls do
so *effortlessly*??

Eventually Mary-Anne can't take it anymore and stops Shelly.

MARY-ANNE

Shelly, come on, come on, Shell,
let's go.

SHELLY

NO!! Let go of me!

MARY-ANNE

Shelly, let's get out of here.

SHELLY

I don't want to leave yet!

Mary-Anne holds Shelly tightly as she walks her off the stage.

MARY-ANNE

I know you don't...

Shelly breaks away from her.

SHELLY

(to the director, messy)
I'm beautiful. I'm *fifty-seven* and
I'm beautiful, you son of a bitch!

She grabs her dance bag as Mary-Anne follows her out.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Mary-Anne follows Shelly, angry and emotional, getting worse by the minute, as she heads to her car, trying to escape Mary-Anne's grasp.

SHELLY

Go do your audition-- you're
missing your audition!

MARY-ANNE

I don't care about it, Shelly--

Shelly turns sharply around to face Mary-Anne.

SHELLY

You should have told me a hundred
years ago to quit this stupid--
bullshit--!

MARY-ANNE

What??

SHELLY

You saw it happening-- you saw me losing Hannah and you didn't say anything, you were there--

MARY-ANNE

I didn't know what was going on-- I didn't know your relationship--!

SHELLY

Yes you did! You saw it! You and Jodie, you want me to be *your* mother but I have a daughter *already*-- I *have* one!

MARY-ANNE

Don't blame us for your mistakes, Shelly-- we love you, and we have supported you--

SHELLY

I DON'T LOVE YOU!! I DON'T CARE!!!
I DON'T-- *FUCKING* CARE ABOUT YOU!
(off Mary-Anne, taken
aback)

What do I have to show for the last thirty years of my life??! I don't even get to keep a piece of my-- my *fucking* costume!

Shelly fumbles through her bag for her car keys.

MARY-ANNE

Where are you going??

SHELLY

I don't know, Mary-Anne! I don't have to tell you--

MARY-ANNE

I can drive you home--

SHELLY

I'm not going home!!

Shelly slams closed her car door and peels out of the parking spot.

CUT TO:

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. BACKSTAGE - LATER

Shelly tears through the deserted backstage area, making a bee-line for the dressing room.

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Shelly enters and heads for her costume rack. She pulls the FAIRY BALLET COSTUME she was sewing earlier off the rack, and RIPS IT IN HALF, THEN RIPS IT AGAIN AND AGAIN UNTIL IT'S IN SHREDS ON THE FLOOR. She sinks down to the floor, weeping.

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. DRESSING ROOM - LATER, PRE-SHOW

Shelly, calmer now, is still sitting underneath the costume rack, looking at the shreds in her hands. Mary-Anne walks in with her dance bag. She puts her bag at her station and sits down on the floor next to Shelly.

SHELLY

...I thought it was so special...
But I just... I missed out...

Shelly sniffles and Mary-Anne grabs a tissue box off a dressing station.

SHELLY (CONT'D)

And at the same time... I can't
believe this is over...

MARY-ANNE

It's special that you were with the
show longer than anybody...

SHELLY

...I just loved that feeling...

Mary-Anne understands. They sit in silence for a moment as a couple of other DANCERS trickle in. They notice Shelly and Mary-Anne sitting under the costumes but don't say anything, they just go about their business.

MARY-ANNE

(re: fairy costume shreds)
You really screwed this thing up.

Shelly laughs, bittersweet.

Jodie enters with her dance bag. She sees Shelly and Mary-Anne beneath the costume rack with the shreds in hand, looking somber. She joins them on the floor.

JODIE
What did you do??

SHELLY
(emotional again)
I ripped it up.

Jodie puts her hands on Shelly and Mary-Anne's knees.

SHELLY (CONT'D)
I had this dream the other night
that I could speak French... I was
really-- I was *speaking* French.
Really speaking it. And I-- I
understood everything...

JODIE
You should go to France.

SHELLY
Ha! Yeah, maybe I should...

MARY-ANNE
...Maybe I should go to California.

SHELLY
Oh you should. You *should*!

MARY-ANNE
I dunno...

SHELLY
Really! What's stopping you? You
should do it, you *should*.

Shelly studies Mary-Anne who looks down into her hands. Then
Mary-Anne starts to cry.

MARY-ANNE
(trying to laugh it off)
I don't know what's wrong with me.

She grabs a tissue from the box. Shelly puts her arm around
Mary-Anne who starts to weep into Shelly's shoulder.

SHELLY
(comforting her)
The next chapter will be different.

MARY-ANNE
...M-hm.

Jodie bursts into tears too. They all laugh a little in spite
of themselves. Mary-Anne wipes Jodie's face, lovingly.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

Dummy.

They sit there in each others arms for a few moments.

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. EDDIE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Eddie turns on the PA.

EDDIE

Places please. This is your places
call for the last time.

PRE-LAP: A cork popping.

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Mary-Anne, Jodie and all the other DANCERS, all in costumes,
with hair and make-up done, gather around Shelly.

SHELLY

To the very last showgirls!

DANCERS

To the last showgirls!

They sip. The PA system turns on.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Places please, this is your places
call. For the last time, this is
your places call for the final
performance of Le Razzle Dazzle.

Hoots and hollers go up in the bustling dressing room.

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. BACKSTAGE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Hannah makes her way through the labyrinth-like backstage
area toward the stage. She's like a fish swimming upstream
through the throngs of costumed women and men, searching for
Shelly. She's holding her camera. She finally spots Shelly.

HANNAH

Mom!

Shelly turns and sees her. She takes a breath.

SHELLY

Hannah.

Hannah smiles and Shelly's heart fills with unmitigated joy.

SHELLY (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

Hannah smiles at Shelly with love and understanding. Shelly smiles back. Inside, her heart is singing.

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Eddie is at his station, headphones on. We see the glow of the stage lights, and hear the music. Shelly, in a massive headdress and her spectacular rhinestoned and feathered grand finale costume, approaches him.

SHELLY
...Hey.

Eddie looks up from his script.

EDDIE
Hi Shell.

SHELLY
You're lucky, you're probably never gonna leave this theater, huh?

EDDIE
(laughs a little)
Maybe not-- that's-- you're probably right-- probably not.

SHELLY
One day your ghost will probably haunt this theater.

EDDIE
Ha-- I never thought about that.

SHELLY
...I can't believe this is gonna be my last time setting foot on that stage...

She looks out at the stage through the wings.

SHELLY (CONT'D)
...I'm gonna go to Hannah's graduation. Was thinking about maybe even moving there...

EDDIE
Oh... wow--

SHELLY

...But Annette also said she could help me get a job cocktailing...

EDDIE

Cute outfits.

SHELLY

(laughs a little)
Not quite like this one...

The lights shift and the finale music begins.

EDDIE

One last chance to give 'em hell.

SHELLY

Ha.

She takes her place in the wing, ready for her entrance.

EDDIE

Shelly?

She looks back at him.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

You look great, Shell.

INT. LE RAZZLE DAZZLE. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

THE GRAND FINALE.

For the first time, we witness the full spectacle of LE RAZZLE DAZZLE.

A spotlight sweeps across the stage, finding Shelly and the dancers, all adorned like peacocks in a million dollars worth of rippling feathers and dazzling, gleaming rhinestones. Even their *teeth* look like they're glittering.

The audience is completely PACKED: smiling, rapt, erupting with cheers and applause.

SHELLY IS FRONT AND CENTER: an absolute beacon of ageless beauty, she belongs right here, radiating grace and charm, every move showcasing her passion and years of dedication.

We witness that feeling she has spoken of: being seen, the intoxication of recognition, being celebrated, the electrifying energy of a thousand lights bathing her in glory. In this moment, she is an iconic American legend: The Great American Showgirl.

We catch glimpses of Jodie and Mary-Anne, along with the ensemble, each of them joyful as they share in their final performance.

As the performance ends, the dancers strike their final poses, and the audience leaps to their feet. CONFETTI explodes overhead, BALLOONS cascade from the rafters, and Shelly is filled with the powerful affirmation of the life she has lived right here on this stage: one filled with passion, acceptance, and the unique, fabled mark she leaves behind on the legacy of American beauty.

CLOSE IN on Shelly, breathing hard, smiling a thousand watts, a euphoric, glorious death.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.