

Neato, Hazel Hubbard, watercolor and collage



[Screenplay]

TITLE ONSCREEN: **RHAPSODY**

INT. BALLET STUDIO, DAY

Sarah Luria

MUSIC: SWAN LAKE (INTRADA: ALLEGRO)

[A girl stands in the center of the room. Her leg and waist are held by a male ballet dancer beside her. She is oddly beautiful. They stand frozen, muscles quivering slightly. ELLIE, their instructor, has her arms folded. She steps forward. She corrects the dancer, **CIELA**, by pulling her chin up. They make eye contact.]

CUT TO:

INT. BALLET STUDIO, NIGHT

[Ellie is sitting at her desk in a corner of the room, working. She puts a hand through her hair and sighs, when suddenly-]

CIELA

Hey.

[She has a towel around her neck, and her phone tucked in her bra. It's playing some classical music. She's in her ballet practice clothes.]

ELLIE

Oh, hi! Sorry, I-

[Ciela pauses the music on her phone.]

CIELA

(cocked head)

What are you doing?

[Ellie turns fully to her.]

ELLIE

Registration stuff- passing people through these godawful server-things we use-

(she rubs her temple)

anyways, what are you doing here so late?

[Ciela smiles.]

CIELA
Working on your choreography.

[Ellie smiles, a little bashfully.]

ELLIE
Am I supposed to be embarrassed
about that, maybe? With how much
you're paying, I think it's
warranted.

CIELA
True, but-

[She seems to think of something to say, but doesn't say
it.]

CIELA
I'll go, leave you to your boring
ballet paperwork.

[She turns, and Ellie catches her arm.]

ELLIE
I would much rather not do this.
(gesturing to work)
Is it- okay, I guess it's way too
late for me to bother the Chinese
food place but-

CIELA
Not gonna offer me something
healthier?

ELLIE
I-

CIELA
Joking. Want to leave in like
fifteen minutes? I just have to get
changed.

ELLIE
Sure.

[She smiles to herself as Ciela walks away.]

INT. HOUSE, DAY

[Ellie is her home, doing laundry. She is loading clothes into a washer, and finds a pair of jeans. She checks the pockets, and out falls a fortune from a fortune cookie. The fortune's message is not shown. Brief flashback to Ellie and Ciela's time together. She smiles, and pulls out her phone.]

INT. BALLET STUDIO, DAY

[Ellie is practicing her own choreography, muttering to herself as she moves to the music we heard earlier. She nods to herself, moves to write something down on a closed notebook near the barre but spots Ciela, looking in on her room. Ellie pauses and gives a little half-wave.]

[Ciela smiles to herself, turns to the notebook again. The notebook's page is flipped to several pages later, and a page is torn out.]

ELLIE

What-

INT. BALLET STUDIO, DAY

[Ciela is sweating, leaping across the studio. The music is fast, frantic. She falls into the arms of her partner, then is pulled back up. Ellie claps, the music stops. She is frustrated.]

ELLIE

Ciela- You can't melt into this,
it's a reluctant- almost unexpected
fall. The music, it goes-
(she hums the tune)
and you move with it, not with your
own agenda. Again.

[They repeat the sequence. Ciela does the move correctly, her body language completely changes. But this time, instead of looking at her partner, she looks at Ellie. Ellie nods, in a sort of teacherly approval as the choreography continues. When Ciela next smiles it is something more. Ellie is startled, but says nothing.]

INT. BALLET STUDIO, NIGHT

[It is a different day. The light is fading from the windows, and Ellie is choreographing to a new song. She is in the zone, her body is completely in sync with the music. A KNOCK on the door interrupts. It is Ciela, with a bag, headed out for the night.]

CIELA

Hey, sorry to interrupt- Daniel wants you to come see him soon.

[Ellie, panting, moves to grab a towel, looking for her water bottle.]

ELLIE

(frowning)

Can't find my water- sorry, do you know about what?

[Ciela looks at the floor, then holds Ellie's gaze.]

CIELA

I don't, just delivering a message.

[She turns to leave. Ellie lifts the towel to her forehead and when she lowers it, Ciela is gone. Ellie turns, and sees her water bottle.]

INT. BALLET STUDIO, DAY

[Ciela is doing one move repeatedly, spinning from within her partner's arms to all the way out, and falling to the floor in the choreography. Ellie claps with frustration.]

ELLIE

Again. Ben, less arm extension after you let her spin out, but hold yourself up, almost gravitate-

[BEN imitates what she is saying as she instructs him. She nods.]

ELLIE

Yeah. Good. And Ciela, when you go to the floor it's relief, relief from him- and you let your arms come lower. All right? Again.

[Later, after this rehearsal, Ellie is gathering her things from her desk and goes to turn out the lights. She notices that there is a paper in the corner. She picks it up. It is a torn sheet of notebook paper covered in dance-related notes.]

INT. OFFICE, NIGHT

[Ellie enters an office. DANIEL is typing on a computer.]

ELLIE

Hey, Daniel. Ciela said you wanted to see me?

DANIEL

Yeah. So we've got one of the company alumni performing in Swan Lake soon, and it's always a rule that someone goes-

[He waves his hand.]

DANIEL

None of us ever really knew her, but it's mandated, and we have tickets. You're the first in the hierarchy for getting the tickets, there's two of them. Do you want them?

[Ellie looks surprised.]

ELLIE

Yeah, sure.

(she smiles ruefully)

My best friend in high school played one of the mini-swans... swanlettes? Ha. Sorry, thanks.

INT. BALLET STUDIO, DAY

[Rehearsal has just ended. Ellie is disconnected her phone from some speakers, then she walks over to Ciela, who is cross-legged on the floor, packing up her stuff.]

ELLIE

Hey, so the company gave me two tickets to a production of Swan

Lake, which has always been a big inspiration and all that- would you like to go with me? I don't have anyone else that would really benefit- and watching that style of dance will help with your training and all-

CIELA

Yes.

[Ellie offers her hand, but Ciela tugs her down to her level, where she is sitting.]

CIELA

I have one condition.

ELLIE

(smiling)

Sure.

CIELA

Call it a date.

ELLIE

I-

EXT. THEATER, NIGHT

[Ciela and Ellie are holding hands walking into the theater. They are both dressed to the nines.]

INT. THEATER, NIGHT

[They are seated, the lights dim a few times; the show is about to start. Ciela leans close to Ellie. Ellie's hands curl up in surprise.]

CIELA

Okay, can I tell you something?

ELLIE

Do you secretly hate ballet?

CIELA

(smiling)

I can stop time.

[The lights dim completely. The tuning of the band begins to overwhelm the noise.]

ELLIE

What?

[Ciela grins **mischievously**. She taps her nose, à la Laura Palmer, and directs her gaze towards the opening curtains. Ellie is confused, but pays attention to the show.]

[Time passes as the watch the show.]

[Finally, the scene in which the White Swan is surrounded by her swan maidens. It is almost angelic. Ciela reaches over and clasps her hand on Ellie's wrist. Everything stops, except for Ellie and Ciela. Ellie gasps, like a sudden jolt. Ciela grins and tugs her down the aisle, nearly tripping. The audience as well as the dancers are all frozen in their positions—feet arched, arms extended. Ciela stands in the middle of the stage and throws off her heels. She gestures to a stunned Ellie. Ellie doesn't get it, is staring around the auditorium. Ciela lifts onto her toes, a small imitation of pointe shoes. She extends an arm in a ballet-like fashion, grinning.]

[They dance. It is Ellie's dance. The final move, the one seen before, where Ciela melts into Ellie's arms, goes well. They are laughing the whole time, not performing but enjoying. Finally they stand, looking out at the frozen audience. Ciela turns.]

CIELA

What did I tell you?

[Ciela kisses her. It is beautiful. They stand in the middle of the stage, surrounded by graceful dancers and frozen people watching them. They pull back. Ellie laughs, freeingly.]

CUT TO BLACK

