

GAUMONT PRESENTS

BALLERINA

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QUAD



QUAD

INT. BRITTANY ORPHANAGE/DINING HALL - DAY

Brittany, 1884.

We start on a grubby stained glass window in the orphanage. Only a single pane of glass is clean and light shines through it... [On sound SLURP! SNIFFLE! SLURP! SNIFFLE!]

... onto the face of Felicie who looks up at the light as she queues for her dinner in a long line of orphans.

The light seems to warm her face.

DOLLOP! Something terrible is dolloped onto the plate. [Along with snot from the nuns nose]

INT. BRITTANY ORPHANAGE/DINING HALL - DAY

BIG CLOSE-UP on the face of a wizened, ugly, warty nun with a lady-moustache. And a drip coming out of her nose.

UGLY WARTY NUN

[On bored loop] Enjoy your meal! Bon appetit

Something horrible is plopped onto a plate.

Felicie looks down at her plate where the food has been slopped.

FELICIE

And this is?...[Thinks better] No don't tell me...

Another, one-wheeze-away-from-death Nun snaps a very stale baguette and hands Felicie a dry crust.

ANGLE ON: Felicie sits on a wooden bench with the other orphans. PAN down the line as, in a Mexican wave, each child eats the slop and then gags...

CHILD 1

This isn't fit for a rat.

Further down the line a kid pulls a rats tail out of his mouth

CHILD 2

It IS rat!

EXT. ORPHANAGE YARD - DAY

ANGLE ON: Later, Felicie does exercises in the yard. The kids in lines. Regimented. They copy an old nun who clicks and cracks every-time she moves.

As she exercises Felicie hears a faint bell jangling sound. And sees flash of bright colour through the gaps in the fence. [The same colour that shone through the stained glass window]

GYM NUN

Uuuup... and dooown... and uuuup.... And doooooown...
[she gets stuck, sees Felicie has stopped training] Felicie
please...

INT. ORPHANAGE CORRIDOR - DAY

ANGLE ON: Later: Felicie files down a corridor, last in a line of orphans. All of the orphans scratch different parts of their bodies because of fleas.

At the end of the line Felicie hears wafting, magical violin music.

As the line files past an open door, Felicie commando rolls through the door and sneaks away.

INT. VARIOUS ORPHANAGE - DAY

Felicie scampers and sneaks up some stairs.

Across a corridor.

And up the stairs to the attic. The music draws her on.

INT. ORPHANAGE ATTIC - DAY

She races across to the window. She gets a trunk and moves it so she can stand on it. She brushes the scary cobwebs away and pushes the window open.

On tip toes she peers out of the window towards the sound of the music.

What she sees blows her mind.

EXT. SQUARE OUTSIDE ORPHANAGE - DAY

A Gypsy encampment: The gypsies have set up camp. A beautiful gypsy dancer performs on a wagon that is covered in paintings of the world. She is hypnotic, colorful, mesmerising and beautiful. Everything the orphanage is not.

[Intercut with shots of Felicie's entranced face. Perhaps her raising her arms to copy the dancer.]

At the end of her act the gypsy dancer bows and blows kisses and throws rose petals.

She spots Felicie watching her from the window and blows her a kiss.

She beckons to Felicie to come.

GYPSY DANCER

Come!

FELICIE

Where?

GYPSY DANCER

With us! To the desert! To the jungle! To the New world!

INT. ORPHANAGE ATTIC - DAY

Felicie is on her very tip toes, over-whelmed by how amazing the dancer is.

They make eye contact. Felicie smiles.

BLAM! The moment is broken when the attic door slams open and Ugly Moustache Nun stands there.

UGLY WARTY NUN

What are you doing, get to your bed!

INT. ORPHANAGE DORMITORY - NIGHT

Felicie sleeps in her dormitory. She has the wooden music box in her hands. She winds and listen to the theme. Then when the music does out. She becomes determined and quickly gets out of bed. She is already fully dressed. She takes a tied-up cloth [bag] from under her bed.

In the next bed a younger sleepy kid stirs and watches her.

SLEEPY HEAD

[Totally snoozy] What are you doing?

FELICIE

I'm escaping! I'm going to join the travelling dancers and get a boat and see the new world!

Sleepy head yawns.

SLEEPY HEAD

Can I come?

Felicie looks down at the kid's hopeful face.

FELICIE

Okay! Be quick, get your stuff.

Felicie turns and takes the music box from under her pillow and kissing it, stuffs it in her knotted cloth [bag].

She turns excited and SLEEPY HEAD has gone back to sleep. Felicie smiles fondly, kisses the kid on the forehead. And then is gone.

Seconds later, we see her shadow creeping along the wall.

INT. ORPHANAGE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Felicie opens the big wooden door of the dormitory and peers out.

A stinky, greasy guard with a stinky greasy dog, patrols the corridor.

When the coast is clear, Felicie scampers down the corridor in the opposite direction.

She heads through the darkened kitchen, taking some buns as she goes.

Then she enters another hallway. But as she does she sees a shadow approaching up the wall, with the distinctive bonnet of a nun.

There is nowhere to hide so Felicie looks resigned to being caught....

...but then the nun turns the corner and it's a SMALL DUMPY NUN.

Felicie looks puzzled. The Nun [making weird clunking noises as she walks] spots Felicie and makes the sign of the cross at her.

MIGGET NUN

(Muffled voice)

Go back to your room.

The Nun continues to walk down the corridor. Suspicious, Felicie follows close behind.

FELICIE

Who are you?

MIGGET NUN

Nun...of your business

Felicie rips off his bonnet. Corentin turns and his face contorts, as if he is a vampire who has just seen the sun.

Mid-contortion Corentin clocks Felicie's face for the first time. He likes what he sees.

CORENTIN

(Charming)

Hey! My eyes like what they see. Nice to meet you
sugar I'm Corentin otherwise known as....the PANTHER!

Corentin strikes a pose.

FELICIE

Strange because right now you look like a skunk.

Corentin drops his pose.

CORENTIN

Panther.

FELICIE

Skunk.

CORENTIN

Panther.

FELICIE

Skunk...

CORENTIN

Panther

FELICIE

Skunk!

DIRTY GREASY GUARD

Hey you!

At the other end of the corridor the greasy guard and the warty nun approach them. Corentin takes Felice by the hand and pulls her down the corridor in the other direction.

FELICIE

What are we doing Skunk?

CORENTIN

We're escaping.

Corentin opens a door that leads to some stairs. As soon as Felicie and him enter, he blocks the door with a metal pole [or broom handle]. Felicie and Corentin run up the stair.

FELICIE

I hope you have a plan.

CORENTIN

Of course I have a plan. I've escaped three times from this orphanage.

Felicie stops running and look at Corentin.

FELICIE

And how many times have you been caught?

CORENTIN

Technically... 3.

FELICIE

(Depressed)

Great!

The two jump as the guard bangs on the door below them.

DIRTY GREASY GUARD

[O/S] Come here you rascals!

Corentin takes Felicie's hand and drags her up the stairs.

EXT. ROOF OF ORPHANAGE - NIGHT

A door opens on the roof. Felicie and Corentin race out. They only stop at the edge of the roof. Felicie looks down on the courtyard below....there is no way down.

FELICIE

Great Plan skunk!

Corentin opens his robe as if he is superman revealing his man tights: he is wearing a really weird contraption.

CORENTIN

For the last three months I have been studying chickens... I know how they eat. [He pecks] I know how they walk. [He walks] I know how they lay an egg...there is nothing about a chicken that I do not know!

He reveals his wings.



CORENTIN (CONT'D)
TA DAH! I call them Chicken Wings!

He puts on a hat with a cockerel crest on top of it.



FELICIE
(Incredulous)
Tell me I'm dreaming.



CORENTIN
I know how you feel, you are falling in love with me, no?

Felicie blinks.

FELICIE
Chickens. Don't. Fly.

Beat. Corentin takes this info in.

CORENTIN
[Panicked] But they have wings, they must fly. Come on!

Corentin flaps his wings a little less confidently.

FELICIE
Let this be a dream...

The door to the roof slams open. The guard and nun tumble out and head towards them.





Corentin shoves Felicie behind him and attaches her to him with a belt.

CORENTIN

Once I've saved you, I'll make you my wife.

(to the guards)

Sirs, this is not goodbye....this is 'Adieu'!

(To Felicie)

Run.

FELICIE

Noooooooooooooooooooo!

Corentin starts to run and Felicie is forced to follow.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

We are going to die!

They reach the end of the roof...

CORENTIN

Cock-a-doodle-doooooooooooo!!!!!

Suddenly they are air-born, just at the moment the guards arrive at the edge and grab for them.

Felicie holds on to Corentin for dear life. Her eyes closed. After a second she opens them.

FOR a second they soar towards the wall and freedom.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

One day everyone will travel like this!

FOR a second it looks like they actually are going to make it.

Felicie whoops with joy.

But...in that one second, Felicie's face changes...

...they start to fall towards the ground. ANGLE ON: both their faces as they realise they are now falling.

They land with a thump in the middle of the court. [They do a somersault and Corentin lands laying on top of Felicie.]

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

As landings go that was not bad...

Felicie spots a little door that leads to the outside world.

FELICIE

That way! RUNNNNNNNNNN!!!!!!!!!!

They are up and running.

CORENTIN

Can we just agree that was flying?

As they run Corentin suddenly looks down at his legs. They are running, but they are off the ground.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

We're actually doing it!

Corentin has the wind in his hair moment...

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

Freedom...

Then he realises that Felicie has lifted him up because she is much taller and is running as fast as she can.

FELICIE

I told you idiot, chickens don't fly.

They run towards the gate.

They whack into the gate: the wings are too big. They jam.

They whack again: the wings are still too big.

FELICIE (CONT'D)
Sideways skunk!

They go sideways through the gate.

EXT. OUTSIDE ORPHANAGE - NIGHT

They run out to find a hay stack on the back of a cart.

Hearing the guard and nuns behind them, they make a bee-line for it.

Seconds later the nuns and guard arrive. They look around them.

QUICK SHOT: INSIDE THE HAY STACK: Corentin grins at Felicie.

CORENTIN
Hmm. A boy. A girl. And a haystack!

He raises one his arm as if he will cuddle her. She bashes him off.

OUTSIDE THE HAYSTACK: The hay ruffles and a nun gets suspicious

The warty nun approaches..

From inside the haystack comes a perfect chicken noise

The nun listens and then goes and look elsewhere.

BEAT:

INSIDE THE HAYSTACK Corentin looks smug and holds up 3 fingers.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)
[whisper] I told you 3 weeks undercover...

Felicie does not react to this, she is off.

FELICIE
Come on...

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE/HEATH ROAD - EVENING

Corentin and Felicie are walking as the sun sets. She is determined, he is more stressed out by it getting dark. He follows behind her looking and jumping at every noise. He walks like a super spy.

CORENTIN

This is fun huh? Two renegades. Two freedom fighters.
In the dark...

Corentin scrabbles about in his shoulder bag.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

I might look like a handsome and... vertically challenged
boy, but I'm actually an inventor. Soon to be a FAMOUS
inventor... and taller.

Corentin brings out a pair of glasses, to which he has attached two candles. He puts them in front of his face and his eyes are made tiny and small.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

See! Goggles to make you see at night. I have called
them... 'darkness defying goggles'! Paris is going to snap
these up. WE are escaping to Paris by the way Cherie.

Felicie sighs and walks on ahead.

FELICIE

Good luck with that.

CORENTIN

You have a better plan?

Felicie does not look back.

FELICIE

I'm going to be a dancer and tour the world... in a
caravan... The world will be my... world!

ANGLE ON: Felicie from above as she smiles and twirls like the gypsy dancer.

CORENTIN

But Paris is chock-a-block of travelling dancers...
travelling and dancing.

She turns back. Corentin puts the night goggles on. He strikes a match and lights the two candles. Felicie watches him.

In LONG SHOT we see the glow cast around them by the glasses.

Beat.

CLOSE-UP on Corentin as he sniffs the air.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)
Things are looking up. I can smell food!

Felicie glances and sees that Corentin's hair is on fire. She instantly turns and start to walk away from him.

FELICIE
It's in your head...

She looks back with a wry smile.

CORENTIN
No, I swear I can smell Barbe-CUUUUUUUUUUUEEEE!

Corentin realises his head is on fire and dances to put it out. Felicie walks on smiling.

Corentin's scream becomes....

EXT. QUIMPER/TRAIN STATION/GATES - NIGHT

....the whistle of a train.

Establishing shot of Quimper station. A carriage passes. After checking the coast is clear Felicie and Corentin enter the gates, Corentin still with smouldering hair.

EXT. QUIMPER/TRAIN STATION/PLATFORM - NIGHT

The tow walks towards the platforms of the station. Felicie heads in one direction, Corentin looks at her...

CORENTIN
Come with me to Paris cherry chin! We make a fantastic team. You like me! You need me!

She walks to the other platform.

FELICIE
No... no , no and... er let me see... no!

She gives him a mock sad wave. Corentin heads to his platform.

INT. QUIMPER STATION - DAY

The Paris train is in the station. Felicie watches it. Suddenly a freight carriage door opens and Corentin pops out.

He shout across at her.

CORENTIN

Have you changed your mind?

Felicie smiles at him but shakes her head.

He looks at her and wrinkles up his face like he is crying.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

I'll [sniffle] miss [sniffle] you...

Felicie drops her smile.

FELICIE

That is not crying...

Corentin instantly drops his sad face.

CORENTIN

Technically... NO. But I am sad...

The train to Paris lets off steam and begins to move off on Corentin's side of the lines.

FELICIE

Enjoy Paris, crazy, midget boy.

The steam from the train rises in the space between them.

In the smoke, each look unhappy to be saying goodbye to the other.

BUT as the smoke clears Felicie sees the greasy orphanage guard and a policeman coming towards her down her platform.

Felicie jumps down towards the Paris train and begins to run.

Her pursuers follow.

The train to Paris is now chugging along the platform [out of the station] . Felicie runs as fast as she can away from the guards and policeman. She disappears into the steam from the train.

CLOSE-UP on Felicie as she runs through the thick steam. She cannot see anything...

...except the shadowy figures that are still chasing her.

The guard and the nun gain on her.

She feels like she might be caught.

Then a hand reaches out in the smoke.

Felicie is lifted/dragged off the ground.

ANGLE ON: Corentin grinning as he pulls her into the train.

Felicie is being dragged along by Corentin.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

[To Corentin] Get off me!

She looks forward. Ahead is railway telegraph pole and getting closer fast.

CORENTIN

It's me! Rescue Panther! And I've just saved your Breton
butt again!

She flattens herself against the train and narrowly misses the pole...

BUT the greasy guard who is behind her does the same thing, by holding onto the train.

...the policeman, however does not and his face shows horror as he sees he is going to whack
the pole.

SPLAT!

Felicie now tries to scramble into the carriage, the greasy guard edges down the train towards
her.

At the front of the train the driver of the train lights his pipe and throws away the charcoal he
has used...

The glowing charcoal travels back down the train towards Felicie...she sees it. It misses her.

Corentin pulls with all his might.

FELICIE

[To Corentin] Leave my Breton butt alone!

Felicie swings out and uses all of her agility to miss The charcoal and land safely in the carriage.

ANGLE ON: The coal lands in the Greasy Guard's pants, he is burnt and screams and falls from
the train.

Corentin watches out of the carriage door and turns back grinning.

INT. TRAIN TO PARIS - NIGHT

Felicie is on the carriage floor, breathless.

CORENTIN

That's two 'thank you's' you owe me now...

Felicie looks at him. Aghast. She stands up and faces off with him. With each point she makes she jabs him.

FELICIE

When you said you were going to fly like a chicken I gave you the benefit of the doubt. When you set light to your hair I went with the flow... Now I KNOW you are the stupidest boy on this whole planet!

CORENTIN

You are just hiding your true feelings swan knees.

FELICIE

Oh I'm not!

CORENTIN

Oh yes you are

FELICIE

Not! Right now I hate you.

CORENTIN

Hate is so close to love.

FELICIE

It's not.

CORENTIN

We both know it is...

FELICIE

Arghhhhh!

CORENTIN

I love it when you get cross!

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

As they carry on arguing, the train trundles over a bridge towards Paris. Their voices carry on the argument.

EXT. BRETON CLIFFS - DAY

Felicie's hands climb a rock.[Is she escaping?] No, her father and her mother are helping her to climb to the top of the cliffs.

There is a Dolmen. Her father gives her the music box. She places it on the Dolmen and then climbs up and dances in the blazing sunshine on the dolmen. As she turns, full of joy, her parents look on.

Then as the music slows, her parents are gone. Felicie looks around her, panicked.

The wind picks up and ruffles her hair.

FELICIE
(Crying out)
Dad! Mum!!!

INT. PARIS/AUSTERLITZ TRAIN STATION - DAY

It is now morning. The train steams into the busy station and SCREECHES to a juddering halt.



INT. TRAIN TO PARIS - DAY

Felicie is sleeping. Corentin is supporting Felicie, tenderly. He has put his jacket over her.

The JOLT of brakes throws Felicie and Corentin onto the floor. Felicie wakes up. She is staring at Corentin's face. He winks.

CORENTIN
If you wanted a kiss Cherie, you only had to ask.

FELICIE
(disgusted)
When's the last time you brushed your teeth.

Felicie pushes Corentin off. She opens the carriage door. Some smoke billows up around them both.

EXT. PYRAMIDS SQUARE - DAY

The two leave the Rue de Rivoli as the smoke clears, bustling Paris in all its chaos is before them..

FELICIE
Wow! Paris is amazing!

Corentin looks at the city in amazement too. He is so amazed he steps in a horse poo: SQUELCH!
NOT amazing.

FELICIE (CONT'D)
So where do we find the dancers?

Corentin looks caught out for a second. He has no idea.

CORENTIN
Er.... This way mademoiselle

...Corentin leads Felicie into a Parisian Square with gardens on one side and grand buildings on the other side. There is a golden statue in the centre. They are dwarfed by it all. ANGLE ON: a quick montage of rapid 'zip' shots of the monuments.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)
Yes Paris! You're going to love it. MY paris. City of Romance. City of dreams. City of... people. Did I say romance? Here we have... the National School of Shaving.

Corentin points at a grand building. Felicie looks.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)
And here we have the museum of Croissants.

Felicie looks, wrinkles her nose and starts to get suspicious.

FELICIE
Croissants?

CORENTIN
... And famous historical baguettes ! And that... er, that is the fish hospital... for sick fish, of course!

Corentin is completely lost, but hides it. Felicie points at the statue in the square.

FELICIE

[Cross] Interesting... and what's that?

CORENTIN

Well, this square is called the... Place de La Hula-Hoop, after... General Hula-Hoop over there.

FELICIE

It's a girl...

CORENTIN

[Bluffing] Yes, General Hula-Hoop was... a girl.

FELICIE

Strange. Because the big words under the statue say 'Jeanne d'Arc'...

Corentin slumps. Felicie smiles at him. [He thinks she finds it funny he has lied]

FELICIE (CONT'D)

Have you ever been to Paris before?

Corentin blushes and scrapes his foot on the floor.

CORENTIN

Technically... no.

Felicie boils over!

FELICIE

Argghhhhhhhhh! I hate you!!!!

He backs off as she comes at him, fuming.

CORENTIN

Calm down missy!

FELICIE

Calm? You've taken me AWAY from my dream. You've lied to me!

As they walk towards the road she puts her face close to Corentin's.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

I do not wish to EVER see your stunted face again.

SUDDENLY, Corentin lunges at her and pushes her out of the way of a speeding horse and carriage. Felicie falls in a puddle. She is soaked and muddy. She spits out water.

CORENTIN

On the bonus side I've saved your life three times!

Felicie sits in the mud and looks around her. Paris suddenly seems dangerous and unfriendly.

FELICIE

I'm cold and I'm hungry and I'm all alone!

Felicie looks sad. Corentin sees and holds out his hand.

CORENTIN

You have me! And I'm the Panther. And I'll find the travelling dancers for you and I'll make this okay and I'll... wash more!

He helps Felicie up. She gives him a less cross look and then walks off. Corentin follows.

EXT. PARIS ALLEY - EVENING

Corentin and Felicie walk down a gloomy narrow alley.[In the shadows the slave-masters lurk, but they do not see this yet.] Felicie shivers as she walks, Corentin gallantly gives her his moth-holed coat. Now he shivers, but tries to hide it.

CORENTIN

Listen, I'm...you know sorry, but I'll make it up to you...Tomorrow I'll find us some cakes. Cream cakes. And then I'll find where the travelling dancers hang out.

Felicie slumps.

FELICIE

Don't bother. I'm 11. I can't dance my way around the world. It's only a silly dream.

CORENTIN

Nah! Stop right there! Never give up on your dream!

They reach the wall at the end of the alley. A dead end. They both look up.

FELICIE

[Sigh]I should never have followed you.

Then from behind them...

SLAVEMASTER 1 [ONE-EYED MAN]

New in town duckies?

They both turn around. There in the shadows are three figures, lurking.

A decrepit and one-eyed man steps out of the shadows and into the light. Corentin senses danger, Felicie is unaware. A tall and gangly thicko and a drunk and husky woman are also step out of the shadows. They smile creepily at the kids. The gangly thicko has a carrot.

SLAVEMASTER 2 [GANGLY THICKO]

[Gormless giggle] Hu-hug

The one-eyed slavemaster blows pipe smoke into Corentin's face. Corentin looks instantly on his guard.

CORENTIN

Hello grand-dad. I am loving your... eye. [To Felicie under his breath] Run...

FELICIE

What?

SLAVEMASTER 2 [GANGLY THICKO]

[Gormless laugh] Hu-hug

SLAVEMASTER 3 [WOMAN]

You need looking after. A BIG warm bosom.

The Slave-masters cackle.

CORENTIN

The bosom thing is tempting. Run...

FELICIE

What?

CORENTIN

...but we are actually okay. [To Felicie] Run!

Corentin nudges her. She nudges him back.

FELICIE

Stop mumbling!

Corentin looks right at her, pushes her to one side.

CORENTIN

Meet me at the fish hospital...

He jumps away from Felicie and strikes some very stupid and outlandish french boxing poses.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

Back off you snaggle-toothed imbeciles! I am the panther....!!!

The Slave-masters look at him, puzzled.

SLAVE-MASTER 1
Eh. Panther is stretching it...!

SLAVE-MASTER 2
I'm saying skunk!

FELICIE
I said that!

SLAVEMASTER 2 [GANGLY THICKO]
[Gormless laugh] Hu-hug.

CORENTIN
Stop! No one can catch the PAN-THER!

Corentin jumps into another fighting pose.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)
One minute I will be here....the next... woaAAAHHHHH

Corentin falls through cellar door. This inadvertently gives Felicie the chance to run

Slavemaster 1 hears and gives chase, but his wooden leg gets caught in a grille. As he moves forward it comes off. The second before he wobbles and falls...

SLAVE-MASTER 1 [ONE-EYED MAN]
Catch her!

The other 2 slave-masters give chase.

ANGLE ON: them all running, seen from above, down the narrow alley.

ANGLE ON: Felicie, as the thicko slave-master gains on her, sees a little cart. As the thicko slave-master grabs for her, she jumps onto the cart. She lands and the handles at the front of the cart rise up and...CLUNK the chin of Slavemaster 2 [gangly thicko]. His eyes rattle. He is knocked cold.

Felicie now sees a wall that she might be able to climb over. She reaches it and jumps up the wall.

ANGLE ON: at the top of the wall there is a hook/lamp. From above we see Felicie's hands jump towards us and reach for it...but she just misses it by a fingertip. She is about to slide back down the wall.

Into shot [below her] comes the big boobs of Slave-master 3.

SLAVE-MASTER 3
No point trying to escape little chicken...I've got you...

Felicie slides down the wall...and then uses the big boobs of Slave-master to BOING back up the wall...grab the lamp and swing herself to safety. Felicie scrambles over a wall and away with a wave.

EXT. PARIS STREET 1 - EVENING (RAIN)

Felicie forces open two planks in a fence erected between two buildings. She peeps out. She steps into the street. As she walks a window opens and some stinky garbage is thrown out. Flies buzz around her. She shivers and walks up the road.

Alone. Cold. Lost. It starts to rain.

EXT. OPERA/STREET - NIGHT (RAIN)

Later. Time has passed. We hear squelching. A wet and shivery Felicie squelches around a corner, worn and tired.

The rain stops. She looks down into a puddle and sees a sparkly wondrous castle. She looks up, she thinks she is dreaming...but there is the most magnificent building she has ever seen. Gold shimmering and magnificent. She looks up at the doorway of the building.

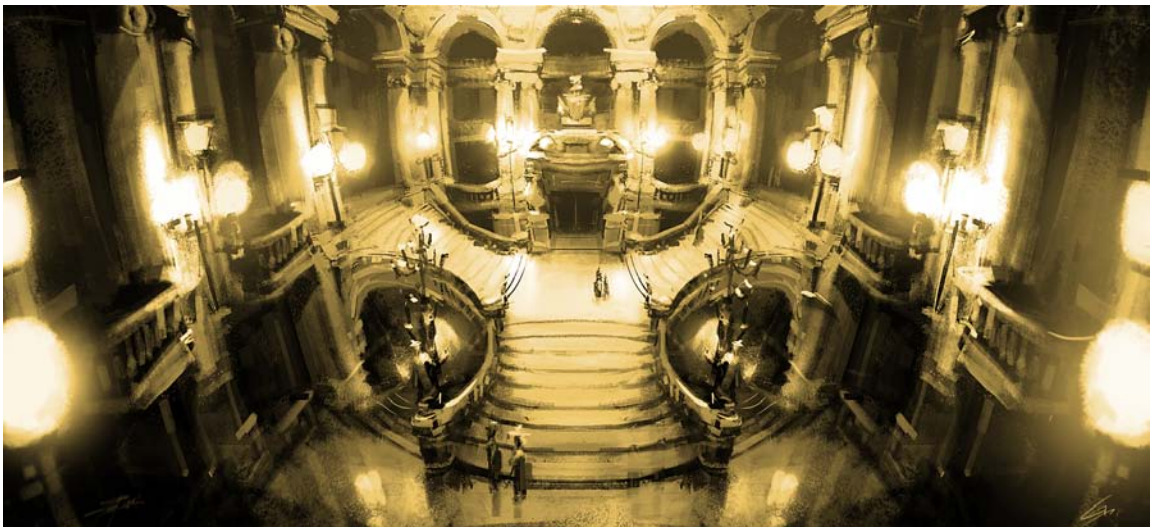
FELICIE

[Reading] 'Academie de musique'.

She climbs some stairs and sneaks inside the huge wooden doors.

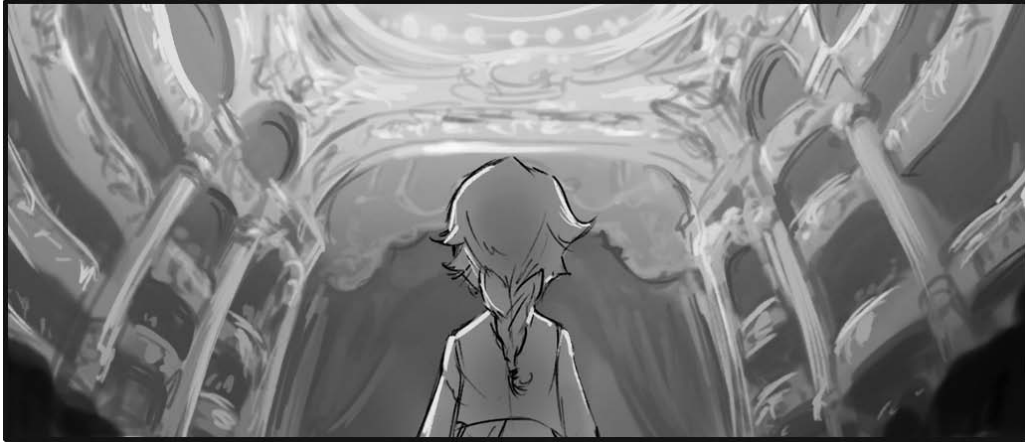
INT. OPERA/HALLWAY & MAIN STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Inside Felicie is dwarfed by the magnificent building. She has never seen anything like it. She GASPS at the luxurious staircase, the golden chandeliers, the gilded statues, sweeping steps and huge golden doors. She hears music and climbs the staircase towards it.



INT. OPERA/MAIN CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Still following the music, she sees a door to the stalls. She enters the auditorium. Felicie approaches the stage.



INT. OPERA/AUDITORIUM STAGE - NIGHT

Felicie sees an Etoile [Rosita Mauri] dancing a solo on the stage. Her moves are so graceful: mirroring the gypsy dancer Felicie is totally caught up in what she sees. She unconsciously mimics the movements of the etoile. She raises on her toes like the etoile, still in a reverie.



...She feels as if she is floating, higher and higher...But then she is yanked backwards by the Janitor, who has grabbed her, like a piece of meat.

INT. OPERA/HALLWAY & MAIN STAIRCASE - NIGHT

The Janitor pulls Felicie out of the door to the box and drags her along the corridor.

JANITOR

Hah! Think you can steal from the customers under my nose?

FELICIE

I wasn't stealing. I was looking.

The Janitor reaches the top of the grand staircase and holds her out over the stairs.

JANITOR

Liar! Empty your pockets!

He shakes Felicie roughly. She looks down the stairs, scared.

FELICIE

Get off me! I WASN'T stealing!!!

JANITOR

Oh yeah? Let's see if this loosens your tongue...

He raises his hand, ready to strike her. Felicie cowers.

ODETTE

Leave her alone!

A woman in her thirties limps towards them. [We hear the toc, toc, toc of her walking stick]. The Janitor stops in his tracks. [This is Odette, 28 years old. Hard exterior because of the hand life has dealt her]

JANITOR

She came here to steal!

FELICIE

I didn't!

Odette pushes Felicie down the staircase towards the door.

ODETTE

Clear off! Go on!

Felicie does not wait to be told again, She scampers off down the stairs three at a time.

EXT. OPERA/STREET - NIGHT (RAIN)

Felicie, in a panic, exits the building at a run. She sits in a doorway, takes out her music box and slowly begins to play it. The tune comforts her.

EXT. OPERA/STREET - NIGHT

One by one the lights in the Opera go out. A sound makes Felicie look up. Odette leaves the building and walks off down the street. On impulse Felicie follows.

EXT. STREET TO ODETTE'S LODGE - NIGHT

Odette walks home. At a distance Felicie follows. Odette turns a corner. Felicie follows...

...And is SWIPED by an angry Odette with the stick.

Felicie jumps to miss the swipe. Odette swipes high and Felicie does the splits to miss it.

Odette has the cane at her throat.

ODETTE
I have NOTHING to steal!

FELICIE
Mumph I canph fpeak!

Odette moves the stick away a little.

FELICIE (CONT'D)
I just wanted to say thank you for saving me.

Odette drops her hand from Felicie's throat. Nods.

ODETTE
You've said it. Have a nice life.

She limps off again. Felicie, rubbing her throat, follows her.

FELICIE
What is that place? It was amazing. I've never seen anything like it before.

ODETTE
It's the Opéra, the place to learn how to dance.

FELICIE
Wow! And who was that dancer on stage?

ODETTE
Rosita Mauri... an Etoile.

FELICIE
Are you a dancer?

Odette stops in her tracks.

ODETTE
I'm a cleaner. And you are an irritation. Go away!

She walks off. Felicie follows and puts on her best sad face.

FELICIE
[Helpless] But you're the first person who's shown me
any kindness in this city...

Odette limps on.

FELICIE (CONT'D)
[More helpless] And I have nowhere to go!

Odette limps on.

FELICIE (CONT'D)
[Even more helpless] And I'm an orphan...

Odette limps away.

FELICIE (CONT'D)
[Genuine] And.... And I miss my parents!

Odette stops. Her face takes this in. Felicie looks genuinely sad. Odette turns to face her.

ODETTE
Nice try. But I hate kids. Especially orphans. Go find
another idiot.

She limps off, into the porch of a building. This building is a shiny new Haussmanian building, slap-bang in the middle of the ramshackle 'old' Paris buildings.

Felicie can't help but follow. As she does Felicie sees the looming and horrible shadow of a strange creature approaching Odette. Felicie ducks back in fear.

EXT. LE HAUT BUILDING/COURTYARD - NIGHT

As Felicie peeks in again she sees that Odette is at the door to her lodge. Odette has not seen the horrible shadow. Felicie sees it first. It is an angular haughty woman who looks like she is constantly sucking on some stinging nettles. [This is REGINE LE HAUT. Snob, social climber and Tiger Mom.]

REGINE LE HAUT

The stairs Odette. The stairs are a disgrace.

Odette sighs.

REGINE LE HAUT (CONT'D)

I have guests tomorrow afternoon. And I want my building looking worthy. Top to bottom.

ODETTE

I understand ma'am.

Odette unlocks her lodge door

REGINE LE HAUT

IF you understand, why are you entering your rooms?

Odette looks incredulous.

ODETTE

Now?

Regine Le Haut nods and is gone in a swoosh of expensive fabric.

Odette limps over to where her buckets and mops are stored in the court. Felicie steps out of the shadows.

FELICIE

Who was that?

ODETTE

Regine Le Haut. She owns this building. She eats orphans. Go away.

FELICIE

Okay, you need me! Let me help you. I can clean. Squeaky-clean is my middle name.

Odette looks at Felicie and then at the stairs.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

I can be your legs. I'm young. It will all seem much easier.

Felicie grins her cute grin. Odette walks away. Felicie slumps. Without turning Odette holds out the mop. Felicie scampers after her.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

By the way, my real name is Felicie...

Odette grunts.

ODETTE

YOU can stay with me, until you find your feet on one condition: no more questions.

FELICIE

I can stay?

Odette heads towards the stairs.

ODETTE

That was a question.

Felicie nods. Beat.

FELICIE

Exactly how long can I stay? Shall we start with a week? A trial period. See if we get on? What do we do first? Am I on mop or broom? Do you like the smell of soap? How long have you lived here? Etc...

Odette sighs. Felicie's voice carries on as they head to the stairs.

INT. LE HAUT BUILDING/STAIRCASE - EARLY MORNING

Later. The sun is coming up. At the bottom of the stairs are Felicie's clogs and Odette's shoes....the camera travels up the stairs towards the sound of scrubbing.

FELICIE (O.S.)

I want to enter the Opera to learn how to dance.

ODETTE (O.S.)

No way.

FELICIE (O.S.)

But you work there in the evenings, you must know people, you could help me.

ODETTE (O.S.)

No!

Odette and Felicie have been scrubbing all night. Both are on their knees.

FELICIE

What the Etoile did yesterday, it was as if she was flying in the air.

Felicie stands and copies a leap. Odette raises one single eyebrow as she sees that Felicie can do this.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

I love dancing. I used to dance with my parents all the time. They told me I was meant for it. Do you love dancing?

ODETTE

[Forceful] I hate dancing.

FELICIE

Is that because you've got a limp?

Odette throws down her scrubbing brush and, pointedly, puts two rags into her ears.

From Felicie's POV we see the stern feet of Regine have entered the shot. Felicie tries to warn Odette. Regine sadistically RIPS the rags out of Odette's ears.

REGINE LE HAUT

[About Felicie] Who is this?

ODETTE

No-one. She helps.

Regine glares haughtily down at Felicie.

REGINE LE HAUT

You feed IT out of YOUR wages.

Odette nods. Regine causally drops her breakfast morsel onto their nice clean floor. Felicie has to hold her tongue.

REGINE LE HAUT (CONT'D)

Now you have finished the stairs, I want you to air and press the linen. I will show you...

Regine gestures for Odette to follow her inside her apartment. Odette stands with great effort. She looks back at Felicie.

ODETTE

[To Felicie] Stay here. Say nothing. Do nothing.

Odette enters the apartment. Felicie washes the floor by the door. But some music from inside catches her ears. She glances inside the open door. She sees some moving shadows and hears some faint voices. Felicie casually CREEPS inside the apartment, as if she is dusting...

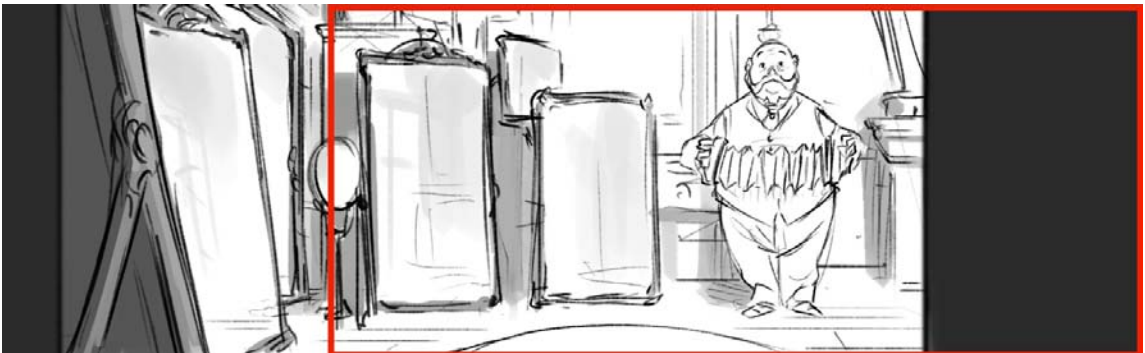
INT. LE HAUT BUILDING/REGINE LE HAUT'S APARTMENT/CORRIDOR - DAY

...Felicie creeps nearer and nearer to the music. She sees through a door a bedroom, that has one wall covered in mirrors.

INT. LE HAUT BUILDING/REGINE LE HAUT'S APARTMENT/CAMILLE'S BEDROOM - DAY

The room is filled with reflections. Felicie peers through the crack in the door and catches glimpses of. In a reflection Felicie sees a vision dance past him in ballet costume, as if she is floating. [This is Camille the Grace Kelly-esque daughter of REGINE LE HAUT. She is cool and beautiful on the outside and indulged and spoiled on the inside.]

Felice peers in further, aware she should not be here, as she watches Camille pose and preen in front of the mirrors. She sees a small dumpy man, in too-short trousers and combed over baldy hair, playing the accordion.[This is ALBERT, the kind and sensitive husband of REGINE LE HAUT. He is bald because she and Camille have hen-pecked all his hair off.] As he plays his trousers flap around his ankles. Felicie giggles.



Camille strikes pose after beautiful pose to the accordion.

Felicie copies one of Camille's movements. But as she does the door creaks open and she is revealed. Camille spots her in a reflection. So does Albert.

ALBERT

Who are you?

FELICIE

[Nervous] I'm Felicie....I work with Odette.

CAMILLE

Aha a little rat!

ALBERT

[To Camille] Manners darling Angel pet. Come in please
Mademoiselle...

Albert looks kindly upon Felicie as he tries to put his accordion away [He gets caught up in it and struggles to free himself.]

FELICIE

I was... watching you dance.

CAMILLE

You weren't watching me, you were admiring me.

At the end of each of her speeches Camille checks her reflection in a mirror.

ALBERT

Come on Camille...

FELICIE

Yes. You are the **SECOND** most wonderful dancer I have
ever seen.

Camille wrinkles her nose.

CAMILLE

You surely mean the first.

FELICIE

No, the second.

Camille sneers and drapes herself over a chair in a pose, [glancing in the mirror as she does].

CAMILLE

You are mistaken. Look!

Camille lowers herself into the splits. Then she rises and spins around until she is standing behind Felicie.

FELICIE

Are you a ballet dancer?

ALBERT

She will be. We are waiting for the letter that admits
her to the Opera. [In a whisper to Felicie] it happens the
Director dines in my restaurant downstairs... So I made
sure he got his steak done **EXACTLY** how he likes it and
then... well... strings were pulled.

CAMILLE

I'm going straight into the Coryphees. Where I belong.
And one day I shall be a famous 'Etoile'.

FELICIE

Etoile! Me too!

ALBERT

How nice!

CAMILLE

Daddy! Act your age! [To Felicie]I'm a star, you're just
orbiting around me.

Camille looks at Felicie in the many mirrors.



CAMILLE (CONT'D)

Silly little rat! Runts like you do not go to Ballet school.
You don't go to ANY school!!! Look in the mirror. Take a
good look. Do you REALLY think that a carrot crunching
peasant with a face like a chewed up bon-bon could
ever be a STAR?

Camille spots the music box in Felicie's pocket in the reflection. She grabs it. She roughly plays
the music box and hears the tune.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

What is this?

Felicie grabs at it. Camille holds it aloft.

FELICIE

Give that back. It's mine. It's precious. Please!

ALBERT
Be nice sweetheart puff cake.

Camille sees that Felicie is upset. She sneers.

CAMILLE
Have it then.

She casually throws the music box out of the window.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)
Oops!

Felicie is aghast and races out of the room. Camille looks in the mirrors, putting on her best 'sorry' face.

EXT. COURT - DAY

Felicie, almost in tears, scrabbles to find the pieces of smashed music box. Above, Odette looks out of the Le Haut window and sees her.

EXT. PYRAMIDS SQUARE - DAY

The fountain. A blurry, ragged shape made up of rubbish lays on the floor. Felicie enters and sits on a wall close by it. She looks down at the pieces of music box that she has saved in a handkerchief. She's sad.

Corentin jerks awake, with dribble on his chin in the rubbish. He sees Felicie and quickly jumps into his panther pose.

CORENTIN
The panther is back!

A passing kid sees him.

PASSING KID
Look mum! A Skunk!



Felicie tries to smile.

FELICIE

Hey skunk!

Corentin sees she is sad..

CORENTIN

What is up with you? Don't you want to poke me or call me something horrible?

Felicie shakes her head. She holds out the pieces of broken music box.

FELICIE

It's all I have left of my parents. And it's...

Corentin looks at the pieces. Sees that Felicie is really sad.

CORENTIN

Well to a non-inventor that might look BROKEN. But I am a man. I have tools. I can fix this. Trust me.

He holds out his hand for the pieces. Felicie looks doubtful.

FELICIE

The boy who said this was a fish hospital wants me to trust him?

Corentin grins.

CORENTIN

So I embroidered the truth... That is why you love me. Hand it over...

Felicie looks at the pieces and then hands them over. She watches as Corentin stuffs them messily in his pocket.

EXT. STREET TO ODETTE'S LODGE - DAY

Corentin and Felicie walk down the street towards the Le Haut building. As they do Felice walks on the road, Corentin walks up a pile of sacks so he is the same height as her. He nudges her and grins.

CORENTIN

How fast am I? 24 sweet hours in Paris and I've already got the chance of a job. Imagine that. I am going to be an engineer's right

hand man. Unless he's left handed.. And then I might have to be his left hand man... huh? Impressed? Looks like I'm the winner of our little bet.

FELICIE

What bet?

CORENTIN

The one about who gets their dream first.

Felicie looks irritated.

FELICIE

We did not bet. And IF we did I would win.

CORENTIN

Are you a dancer?

FELICIE

NEARLY. I'm going to be... to be... a ballet star!

CORENTIN

What's ballet?

Felicie steps away from him.

FELICIE

This!

She starts to dance, copying the moves she saw Camille make. Corentin is obviously impressed. Felicie reaches the Le Haut building and stops dancing.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

And THIS is where I'm staying.

Corentin GULPS as he sees the building.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

Have a nice time, Skunk. Oh and I think you agree... I won the bet.

She waves him a cheeky wave goodbye. And is gone inside. Corentin dumbfounded.

EXT. LE HAUT BUILDING/COURTYARD - DAY

Felicie walks in the court and finds the postman.

POSTMAN

[Like a wine taster] A letter for Mr Albert Le Haut and
Madame Regine Le Haut. Nice Paper. Hand made.
Embossed. Blue ink. Slight whiff of expensive cigar.
From the Opera. Absolutely unmistakable...

Felicie snatches the letter from him. The postman leaves. She starts walking towards the stairs to deliver the letter.

INT. LE HAUT BUILDING/REGINE LE HAUT'S APARTMENT - DAY

Felicie mounts the stairs to the apartment, dragging her heels. At the door of the flat she tentatively knocks.

CAMILLE [O/S]

Arghhh Mummy! My dress is not starched enough.
You're ruining my life!

Ripping noise. Then the door opens and Camille faces Felicie.

CAMILLE

What do you want?

Felicie raises the letter.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

Whatever! Fix this little rat! Tonight!

Camille throws the dress at Felicie and slams the door. Felicie looks down at the letter. She is conflicted.

Felicie stops, hesitates, then takes a deep breath, turns around and leaves, clutching the letter in her hand.

EXT. OPERA/STREET - DAY

Felice clutches Camille's letter to her chest as she stands outside the Opera. She looks genuinely scared. She holds her breath

FELICIE

(Motivating herself)

I am Camille Le Haut. I am Camille Le Haut.

Then she walks in.

INT. OPERA/HALLWAY & MAIN STAIRCASE - DAY

Felicie enters the building, trying to walk like a haughty lady [Camille]. But she instantly stops and gasps at the activity she sees. Pupils in tutus bustle up the grand stairs, men carry scenery, musicians tune their instruments, etc

As Felicie gawps, the Janitor glares down at her. He is suspicious and grabs the letter she clutches.

JANITOR

You are not Camille le Haut.

FELICIE

Of course I am.

JANITOR

No you're not. This time I call the police.

The Director of The Opera arrives, SINGING with the voice of a tenor. He stops in front of the Janitor and Felicie.

DIRECTOR OF OPERA

What's going on here?

He bashes the Janitor on the arm with a jovial punch. The Janitor does not flinch.

JANITOR

She says she is Camille le Haut...

The Director takes the letter and speed reads it.

DIRECTOR OF OPERA

[Menacing] Are you Camille le Haut?

FELICIE

[Timidly] Yes.

DIRECTOR OF OPERA

[Happy] She is Camille le Haut.

He hides the letter behind him and laughs a laugh that shakes the building.

DIRECTOR OF OPERA (CONT'D)

[Punching the janitor again] Return to your post my friend.

The Janitor leaves, dumbfounded.

DIRECTOR OF OPERA (CONT'D)

[To Felicie] Welcome Miss Le Haut.

He kisses her hand.

FELICIE

[Pretending to be cool] Charmed...

DIRECTOR OF OPERA

I am Auguste Emmanuel Vaucorbeil, director of the Opera. [In whisper] But you girls have nicknamed me Corby.

The Director and Felicie advance towards the grand staircase.

DIRECTOR OF OPERA (CONT'D)

You are here because your father serves the best entrecote in Paris. I hope you dance as well.

FELICIE

[Mock-confident] You'll see... of course....

DIRECTOR OF OPERA

Good, I have enrolled you straight into second grade : the Coryphees class. Ah! Monsieur Olivier Riche, Director of Discipline

The Director of Opera points to a long, spindly legged man with a tummy that bulges over his skinny pants, who is loping down the stairs towards them. [This is OLIVIER RICHE, director of Discipline [DOD]. A control freak grasshopper look-a-like.]

DIRECTOR OF OPERA (CONT'D)

Enjoy yourself. And make me and your father proud. Monsieur Riche will fill you in with details.

The Director parts and carries on singing his song.

FELICIE

[To the DOD giving him her hand] Charmed....

The DOD looks down. His face gives a single twitch of disapproval.

DOD

Follow me...

The DOD turns and walks back up the stairs. He takes long grasshopper steps and Felicie has to take five to keep up.

DOD (CONT'D)

Mademoiselle Le Haut... What are we wearing today? This is a joke? Yes?

FELICIE

Er.... I was at a Breton.... peasant Party.

DIRECTOR OF DISCIPLINE

Hm. Partying on a school night 20 sous.

FELICIE

Really?

DOD

Asking questions 20 sous...

FELICIE

But..

DOD

Answering back 20 sous...

Felicie bites her tongue.

DOD (CONT'D)

Biting your tongue 20 sous.

They reach the top of the stairs and turn to head out of sight, but we can still hear them.

FELICIE

[Irritated OS] Urgh!

DOD

[OS] Getting frustrated 20 sous.

FELICIE

[OS] But I don't have any money with me!

DOD

[OS] Not having any money...20 sous...

Their voices continue as...

INT. OPERA/BALCONY/CORRIDOR - DAY

The DOD stops in front of some props and scenery that make him look utterly ridiculous [a Marie Antoinette wig and earrings, a devil's horns, antlers, a Viking helmet and plaits....etc] Felicie sees this and stifles a laugh.

DOD

Stifling 20 sous.

And he is off again.

DOD (CONT'D)

For not having your regulation uniform a fine of 20
sous.

Felicie scampers after him.

FELICIE

But I don't have a uniform yet...

The DOD turns a corner, Felicie follows.

INT. OPERA/CORRIDOR 1 - DAY

...in the next instant Felicie is balancing a pile of ballet clothes as she staggers after the DOD.

DOD

You are responsible for cleaning your uniform. Fine for
dirty uniform. 20 Sous.

The DOD walks out of shot. Felicie, blinded by the pile of clothes follows. Two set builders walk a
piece of set in her way and she has to negotiate a door to follow the DOD.

INT. OPERA/CORRIDOR 2/STAIRS/CORRIDOR 3 - DAY

Felicie emerges from another door, she is now in her ballet clothes and hopping to tie the
ribbon on her last shoe. As she, she hops into an open toolbox. She clanks and kicks it off. She
runs down the corridor, but between her and the DOD there is now a huge, tall, elegant man
walking with a cane. [He walks like Fred Astaire] Felicie tries to get around him on both sides.
Felicie gets frustrated. [Road rage] and barges past him, nudging him.

FELICIE

Hey! Some of us have got places to be!

His cane falls to the ground with a clatter. Felicie runs past.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

You had it coming Flamingo!

Merante watches her and raises an eyebrow. Then he kicks his foot and makes the cane fly up
into his hand.

INT. DOOR TO CLASSROOM - DAY

Felicie arrives breathless. The DOD has stopped in front of a door. He tuts.

FELICIE
[Breathless] I know 20 sous!

The DOD turns.

DOD
Not this time.

Felicie looks relieved.

DOD (CONT'D)
40.

The DOD opens the door. Felicie loses her smile and enters.

INT. OPERA/CLASSROOM - DAY

20 girls in ballet uniform are warming up in concentrated silence. [These are the pupils, including NORA and DORA, sisters but from different planets, MARIE-CLEMENTINE, open-faced and artistic.]

Felicie enters and tries to smile and be friendly with everyone, but they are busy, stretching and warming up.

FELICIE
Hi, I'm F... I'm friendly! AND my name is Camille.

Nobody takes any notice.

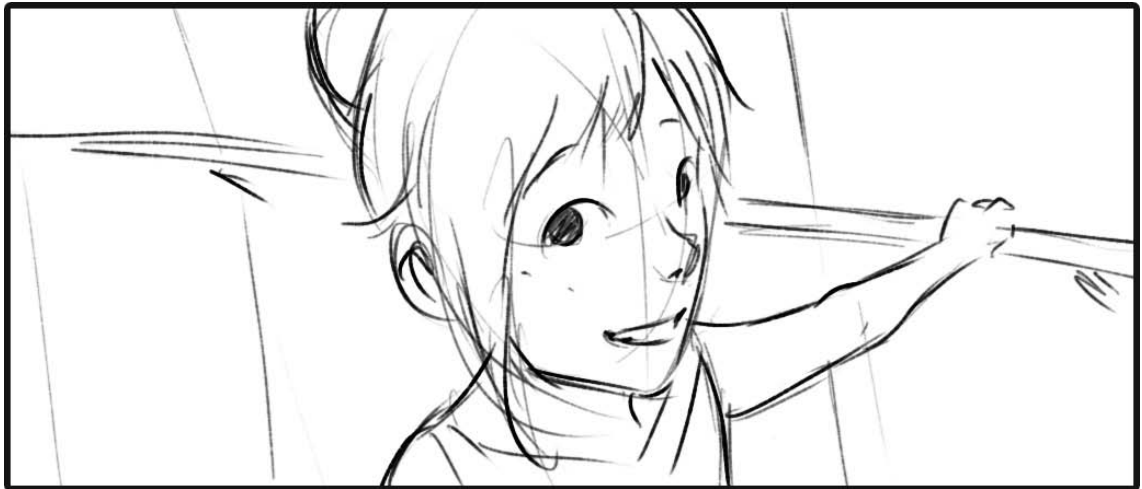
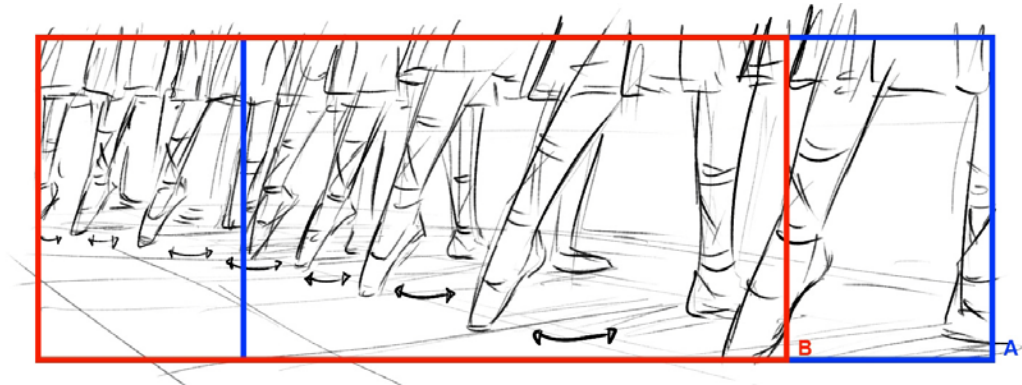
FELICIE (CONT'D)
Okay! Super!

She is feeling that she does not belong. Marie-Clementine gestures at her to be quiet with a smiling face.

MARIE-CLEMENTINE
[In a whisper] You should warm up!

Felicie starts to rub and tap herself as if she is making her skin hotter. Marie-clementine giggles at this. Felicie giggles too.

Then BLAM! The door opens and Merante enters with a commanding, dramatic walk. [He is followed by a violinist who lumbers in and sits in a corner in a fug of depressed pipe smoke: Noiret, nihilist violinist]. With perfect grace, all of the students run to the barre and form a perfect line. Felicie copies and poses behind Marie-Clementine.



TRACK along the perfectly posed students all in the same perfect pose. Felicie pops her head out to see who has caused this fuss. She sees the guy she knocked aside. Her face drops.

FELICIE

[Whisper to MC] Who is that?

MARIE-CLEMENTINE

[Whisper] Louis Alexandre Merante... Ballet Master, world famous choreographer and the man who performed the most fouettes ever in a single solo.

FELICIE

[Whisper] Foo-what?

MARIE-CLEMENTINE

[Whisper] Turns. Really difficult turns. 187.

Felicie closes her eyes, sighing.

FELICIE

Ah.

Merante stands at the head of the line. He commands attention.

MERANTE

Today is an important day. I have gathered all the
Coryphees together to audition for a new ballet which
will debut on Christmas Eve and star Rosita Mauri.

There is a gasp of excitement from the girls, a ripple of a whisper 'Rosita Mauri'. Merante coughs
and the girls quickly shut up and pose again.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

[pointing with his cane] You. You. Not You. You...

He regards Felicie.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

[pointing at Felicie] You!
[to the girls] Advance!

The chosen girls step forwards.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

Mesdemoiselles...you can trot back to your classes.

The eliminated girls are devastated. Felicie does not understand. The DOD coughs.

DOD

Monsieur le Ballet Master. May I have a word?

As Felicie watches the DOD whispers in Merante's ear, while looking over at Felicie. Merante's
face shows his displeasure and growing anger. The DOD gestures for her to go back to the barre.

Merante walks the classroom, all the time staring pointedly at Felicie.

MERANTE

Every girl still in this room has a chance to dance in my
new ballet...except you.

He points at Felicie.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

You have all shown great promise in your classes...
except you.

He points at Felicie again. She now looks worried.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

You have all worked hard... except you!

He points again. Felicie slumps.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

You are here because of talent and guts...

He points at Felicie.

FELICIE

Except me!

Merante scowls.

MERANTE

This is what happens. Every day we have an audition.
One of you will be eliminated each time.

He walks up to Felicie.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

Today little rich girl, no matter what strings you pulled
to get here, that will be...YOU!

FELICIE

[Unsure] But... my father serves the best entrecote in
Paris...

He leans in closer.

MERANTE

I am a vegetarian...

Felicie lowers her head. Merante smiles and moves away.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

The ballet is called La Korrigane!

Merante nods at Noiret, who looks irritated to have to stop smoking. He puts his still lit pipe in his pocket and stands wearily up. He starts to play: as smoke billows from his pocket, the music soars and he comes to life too...

It is the music from Felicie's music box.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

I have inserted a section of traditional Breton folk music
in the ballet. This is what one of you will dance.

...Felicie listens and Merante's words fade. Tears form in her eyes. Felicie is transported and closes her eyes.

Merante claps again to bring her round.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

So follow, now we train!

He exits through some doors to the rotonde.

EXT. ROTONDE - DAY

An establishing shot of the rotonde from outside. We see Merante walking the room and everybody training. Hard.

INT. ROTONDE - DAY

The class is in progress.

We see that Felicie is agile but is struggling. In this amazing new room we also see that there is a balcony: A gorgeous, louche boy, who has his feet dangling over the rail, notices Felicie. [This is RUDOLPH: dancer in the company and Russian aristocrat.]

At the end of the class we PAN down a line of perfectly regal serene faces and end on Felicie's red and puffed out.

MERANTE

And to finish...the splits...

The class of girls all slide gracefully down into the splits. Felicie does too. But they glide, she jolts.

FELICIE

[straining] Grumph. He-ahhh. Hummmmm.

She reaches the ground and copies the pose of MC.

MERANTE

And rise!

The rest of the girls rise like elevators. So does Felicie.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

The class is over. And the person who is leaving us today is you...Pack your trunk, you dance like a depressed elephant.

Merante raises his cane towards Felicie. BUT before he finishes, he notices a girl further down the line who is stuck on the ground in the splits. She has a pained grin on her face.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

Rise please Mademoiselle.

The girl knows she is stuck, she smiles a bigger smile.

STUCK GIRL

[Through clenched teeth]But I like it here....

Merante raises an eyebrow.

STUCK GIRL (CONT'D)

[still clenched] I'm stuck!

Merante nods and gestures to Noiret. He sighs again and goes over to the stuck girl, picks her up [in her stuck position] and carries her out of the room. [Getting her stuck in the door on the way].

Merante turns back to look at Felicie.

MERANTE

I'd say 'a bientot', but I hope we never meet again...

Felicie stares at Merante. She summons all of her courage. Takes a deep breath and stares at him defiantly.

FELICIE

But you said ONE person per class...

Merante stares at her. [So does Rudolph from the balcony]

MERANTE

Looks like you get to come back Bourgeoise. But then it really will be bye-bye to you.

Merante sweeps out of the class.

INT. OPERA/CORRIDOR - DAY

Felice and Marie-Clementine walk down the corridor. There is hustle and bustle all around like an American High school movie. Felicie walks through it all, down-hearted.

Two other girls from the class join them: NORA and DORA. [DORA is a future footballer's wife and NORA is Steve Carell in bunches]

MARIE-CLEMENTINE

Camille, if you don't stretch, you won't be able to walk tomorrow.

DORA

And Oh my God the PAIN if you don't have a bath tonight in as hot water as you can bear!

MARIE-CLEMENTINE

And tomorrow rub some rosin on your feet to harden the blisters. Here.

She takes a block of rosin from her bag and gives it to Felicie.

NORA

AND it's Tuesday....so remember tomorrow is Wednesday.

They pass STUCK girl who is still in the splits and crying to her friends.

FELICIE

Thanks, er...

MARIE-CLEMENTINE

Marie-Clementine. But everybody calls me MC.

DORA

And I'm Dora.

NORA

And I'm not.

Felicie looks. MC mimes 'NORA' at her

FELICIE

Thanks for the advice, but Merante is going to pick me tomorrow. I have no chance.

DORA

There's always a chance.

NORA

And if not...you'll have to give up on the whole idea.

Felicie stares at NORA.

FELICIE

I REALLY need to dance this one...

Felicie looks at the three girls. MC sees how serious she is.

MARIE-CLEMENTINE

Then you have 12 hours to work really hard, listen, push yourself and then work some more.

DORA

There are like classes this afternoon and then like more classes in the morning...

NORA

And...sometimes my elbows feel like they are on fire...

Felicie spots Odette further down the corridor, cleaning. With no way out Felicie opens a classroom door and walks in.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - DAY

Felicie enters a room where RUDOLPH dances a slavic, passionate dance that shows off his dancing skills and body.

Felicie is blown away. She is followed by MC, DORA AND NORA walk in on a new classroom. The girls have one reaction: WOWZA [FELICIE looks open mouthed. MC raises a single goth eyebrow, Ficelle/Dora pouts and poses. Nora makes rabbit shapes in the shafts of sunlight.

FELICIE

[To M CLem] Who is that?

MARIE CLEMENTINE

Rudi. Top boys class.

DORA

Holder of best cheekbones at the opera award.

NORA

He's so blond.

Nora grabs the curtain and starts pulling it up on her face, hiding with emotion. She stays like that the entire scene. Rudolph's dance finishes in an athletic manner. He sees the girls standing there. He walks towards them. He wipes a towel on his sweaty face and throws it on the floor. Even as Ficelle gives her best Victoria Beckham look, he approaches Felicie. She looks in awe of him.

RUDOLPH

You are new yes?

Felicie [and the other girls] nod.

RUDOLPH (CONT'D)

Do you know the opera?

Felicie [and the other girls] shakes her head.

RUDOLPH (CONT'D)

Then come. I show you something pretty cool.

In a bound Rudolph is at the round window. He opens it and gestures for Felicie to follow.

After they exit. Beat. Then the remaining girls all dive for Rudolph's sweaty cloth and scabble for it like seagulls for a scrap of food. Nora peeks out from behind the curtain to look at them.

EXT. OPERA/ROOF - DAY

Felicie follows Rudolph out onto the roof of the Opera. She instantly stares out in awe. Paris is laid out below her.

RUDOLPH

Cool Da?

Felicie nods. This is beautiful. Rudolph climbs on the roof, jumping from section to section with surprising agility. He jumps onto a cornice.

RUDOLPH (CONT'D)

You were impressive in there.

Felicie giggles and stammers.

FELICIE

Phanks... you.

She tries to follow Rudolph like a cool grown up. She is agile too, but unsure at this height. She misses the last leap, but manages to recover her balance before Rudolph sees.

RUDOLPH

You have guts, Camille... But your dancing sucks.

Felicie nods. Rudolph, on the edge of the cornice, takes a step backwards and falls suddenly out of sight, Felicie screams with horror and rushes to the edge. Rudolph is two metres below, on another roof section, looking at her playfully.

Felicie winces. Rudolph carries on towards the edge of the roof. There he finds an imposing golden statue. Felicie follows, trying to look cool.

FELICIE

Are you in the company?

Rudolph nods. He takes a pocketknife out and engraves an "R" in the pedestal. Felicie is shocked.

RUDOLPH

Yep. My name is Rudolph Dimitriev, Stanislav, Artiem Rankovsky... the third.

FELICIE

BIG choice of names there. Cool. That's cool. Really cool.

Rudolph climbs into the statue's arms and sits there while Felicie watches, dumbfounded. The view is absolutely gorgeous. Felicie, stunned, forgets about her fear of heights for a moment.

RUDOLPH

The sky is the limit!
Don't worry if you find it hard in the beginning. You
know, I started out just like you.

She nods and struggles to sit down on the edge of the roof. Felicie smiles at him awkwardly.

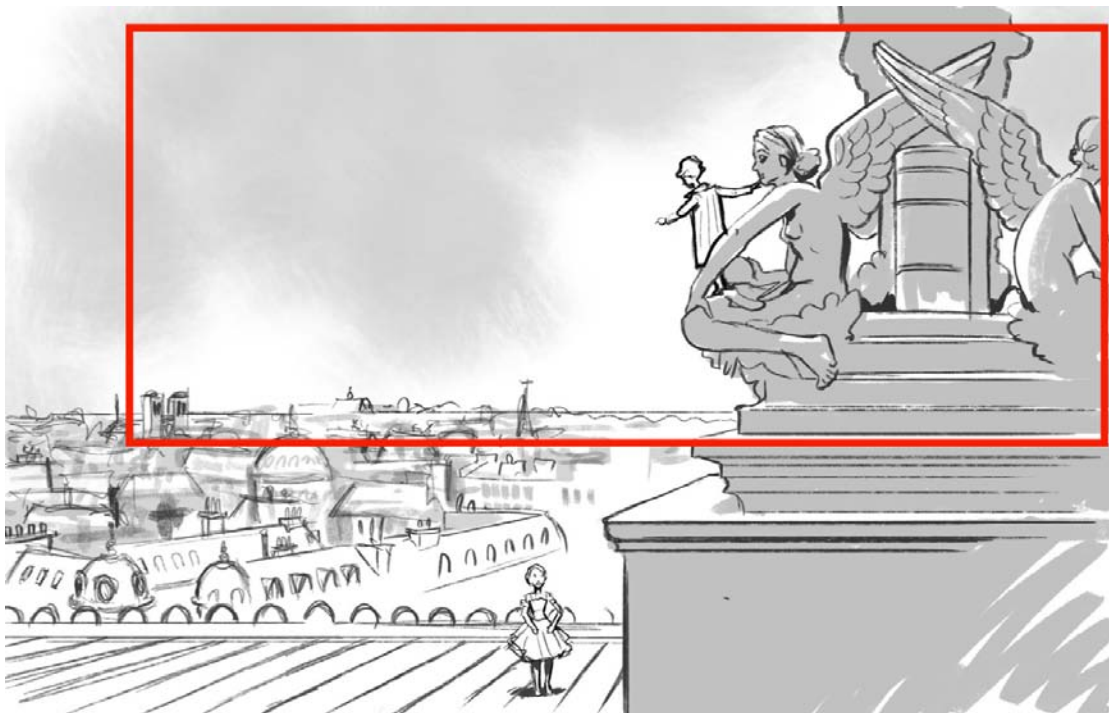
RUDOLPH (CONT'D)

Never let them break your spirit.

FELICIE

Uh-huh.

Rudolph comes back down, as agile as a monkey.



RUDOLPH

Come on, it's getting late. I'll show you down. And don't
let Merante call you names. Us bourgeois must stick
together.

He goes to a window in the roof and opens it for Felicie. She smiles at him and nonchalantly tries to go in the window. Instead she pushes it and falls through...

INT. OPERA/CORRIDOR 6 - DAY

...to the floor in front of Odette mopping. Rudolph peeks through the broken glass roof.

RUDOLPH

[with laugh] Are you all right Camille ?

Felcie grins up at him.

FELICIE

Yep. I'm okay!

As Felicie brushes herself off she turns and there is. Odette, dumbstruck.

ODETTE

Camille?

Felicie's face drops. She tries a forced smile.

EXT. STREET TO ODETTE'S LODGE - EVENING

Odette walks forcefully home. The streets are busy and people and objects constantly block their way. Felicie runs behind Odette, trying to keep up.

FELICIE

Odette! Odette! Wait! I can explain

As she walks she dodges in and out of the crowd.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

Ok, I made a mistake. A big mistake! But you have to understand me, yes I stole her name... she broke my music box and I was angry... and it was wrong.... But you have to understand me, it's all changed, I need to dance that part... That music... it's mine... it's my parents... it's home.... It's all I have

Odette ignores Felicie and reaches the Le Haut building and goes in.

EXT. LE HAUT BUILDING/COURTYARD - EVENING

Odette walks up to the door of the lodge. Felicie arrives as Odette reaches the lodge door. Odette enters and slams the door of the lodge.

INT. ODETTE'S LODGE - DAY

Felicie enters the lodge.

FELICIE

I'm sorry! Triple sorry. If there was a bigger word for sorry I'd use it...

Odette turns on Felicie, cold and stern.

ODETTE

I let you into my life and you lied to me. I don't like lies. I could lose my job because of you.

Felicie lowers her head.

FELICIE

I get it. I messed up. But you don't understand what it feels like.. When I dance...it feels like everything else fades away...like I'm an exploding firework...or I'm walking on a calm sea...It takes me to a new world...and...and...[seeing Odette's stern face] I'm truly sorry.

Odette stares at Felicie. This has struck a chord with her, but saying nothing she goes to her bedroom and closes the door. Felicie slumps at the lodge table

INT. ODETTE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Odette enters her room. She sits on the bed. And then looks up at a box on her armoire.

INT. ODETTE'S LODGE - DAY

Felicie sits at the table, sad.

INT. ODETTE'S LODGE - DAY

Odette gets the box down and opens it. Inside there are some battered old ballet shoes.

INT ODETTE'S LODGE - DAY

There is a knock on the lodge door. Felicie stands up and opens the door. It's Regine.

REGINE

Any mail?

Felicie looks at Regine and reaches inside her pocket for the Opera letter. As Felicie is about to produce the letter...

ODETTE

There is no mail.

Odette pulls Felicie's hand away.

REGINE

As soon as there is...fetch it!

Regine sneers down at both of them and then is gone. Odette looks at Felicie.

ODETTE

Can you dance?

Felicie looks sheepish.

FELICIE

[unconvincing] Yes...at least I think.

Odette snorts.

ODETTE

Training starts at 8am tomorrow.

EXT. LE HAUT BUILDING/COURT - DAY

A sleepy Felicie stands in the middle of the court. Odette bangs her cane on the cobbles and Felicie jumps.

ODETTE

Dance!

FELICIE

What?

ODETTE

Dance. Do whatever you want, express yourself.

An astonished Felicie begins to dance: an anarchic mixture of moves, with little rhythm, but buckets of energy and passion. She uses the stuff around her to make a rhythm. Odette sees both of these things, but remains poker-faced.

Felicie stops, out of breath and smiling. Odette looks at her. Then turns on her heels and heads to a corner of the court [the corner where the washing is hung]. Felicie tries to follow her, out of breath.

FELICIE

So? How was it? Thumbs up or down?

ODETTE

[Still walking] Let's see. You lack precision and finesse. You have little or no sense of rhythm. You lack balance, grace and charm...and you have the lightness of a depressed elephant.

Felicie looks puzzled.

FELICIE

Merante used EXACTLY the same phrase. How come?

ODETTE

After 10 years of cleaning you pick stuff up.

Felicie looks suspicious. Odette is looking at the puddles in the court under the washing line. Felicie looks at them too.

FELICIE

What are we looking at?

ODETTE

This is going to work best for me if you keep your pie-hole shut.

She chooses a puddle. She takes a wooden handled bell from her pocket and attaches the leather cord to the washing line.[The line is above Felicie's head]

ODETTE (CONT'D)

Stand in this puddle. Jump up. Ring this bell. Land and do not splash the water.

Felicie looks at Odette.

ODETTE (CONT'D)

Go!

Odette walks away. Felicie looks at the puddle.

FELICIE

For how long?

Odette does not answer and enters her lodge. Felicie looks as if this is crazy. Pauses and then steps into the puddle. She looks up at the bell. She jumps. Rings the bell with her hand and lands with a big splash that covers her in puddle water...She narrows her eyes. She is going to master this.

EXT. LE HAUT BUILDING/COURT - DAY

Montage of Felicie trying the exercise for the whole of the day.

Jump. Ding. Splash. Repeated. The hours pass. Felicie gets more and more frustrated. [show time passing we include: Odette going about her business around her. Felicie wringing out her socks, it rains, Odette silently re-fills the puddle. Pigeons on the roof watching her and moving their heads, etc]

Finally, as the sun sets a tired, wet and aching Felicie centers herself for one last try. In a Kung FU Panda moment. she focuses and then jumps, rings the bell and STILL lands with a splash. She is down hearted, tired and deflated. She sees her face in the puddle and decides to go one more time.

This time she jumps, dings and lands, making hardly any ripple in the puddle. Her face is ecstatic.

FELICIE

[joyous] Odette! I did it! Hey!

Felicie giggles and jumps up again, rings the bell and...

INT. OPERA/AUDITION ROOM - DAY

...lands her jump with grace and lightness. She is in the class, with MC, NORA and DORA all doing the same jumps. Merante walks among them. He raises an eyebrow when he sees Felicie. He is surprised by the change in Felicie, even though she is still not channelling her energy and passion.

INT. OPERA/AUDITION ROOM - DAY

End of the class. The girls are lined up. Felicie thinks he is going to choose her. Merante looks at Felicie. Felice closes her eyes and lowers her head.

MERANTE

You!

Felicie looks as if she accepts this and opens her eyes. Only to see that he is in front of someone else.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

You have the balance of a drunken horse. Walk the floor to the door!!

The girl leaves sadly, stamping her feet as she goes.

FELICIE

Yes!

Merante gives her a stern look. In the balcony Rudolph giggles.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

Sorry.

She raises her head and exchanges a smile with Rudolph.

INT. LES HALLES MARKET/IRONWORK ROOF - DAY

Odette climbs the stairs towards the ceiling of Les Halles. Felicie scampers after her full of both her triumph in the class and of Rudolph.

FELICIE

He let me stay and I was like.. 'I'm toast' and then he sent this other grumpy-knickers home and not me.

Odette grunts and climbs.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

And then this boy Rudolph, who is a real Russian prince with a castle and peacocks was looking at me all the time...like this [she does a look]... then like this [she does another look] and then once like this [she does another one]

Odette stops at the top of the stairs.

ODETTE

The next class is in three days. If I were you I would focus on that.

FELICIE

Okay... I'll focus.. focus...I'll really focus....

She reaches the top of the stairs. She makes faces and mutters behind Odette's back and then...arrives right at the top of Les Halles. She teeters on the edge. The market is laid out below her. Way below.

Odette points at the metal girders that criss-cross the roof.

ODETTE

When you are ready, when you have understood all the facets of dance and mastered all techniques you will be able to jump from girder to girder...

Felicie looks at the girders. They are big gaps.

FELICIE

I am ready...

ODETTE

And I'm the Empress Josephine.

FELICIE

Trust me. I'm ready.

Odette smiles a wry smile and ties a cord around Felicie's waist. Now Felicie has to do it. She focuses, makes her jump and COMPLETELY misses the first girder.

Felicie falls. Odette struggles with the rope as it whizzes through her hands...

INT. LES HALLES MARKET - DAY

Felice plummets down into a big blue cheese on a cheese stall. The owner and the customers are amazed.

ODETTE

[Shouting from above]You should trust me... you're not ready.

EXT. STREET TO EIFFEL'S STUDIO - DAY

Corentin and Felicie are hitching a ride on the back of a horse drawn bus. He is sniffing her.

FELICIE

Stop with the sniffing!

CORENTIN

Sorry, but you stink of cheese.

FELICIE

You don't talk to a lady like that...

CORENTIN

Are you sure you're at the opera and not some kind of farm?

Felicie scowls. Corentin holds his nose.

FELICIE

... A ballerina's life is so intense! It's like lessons and auditions and then lessons and then practicing with Odette. It's non stop exhausting.

Corentin gives her a Larry David look. Something, apart from the cheese smell, is bothering him.

CORENTIN

By the way... How did you get in at the Opera?

FELICIE

Well, hum... I saw some light and...

The bus turns a sharp corner, Corentin leans closer to her and looks at her face closely.

CORENTIN

Liar.

FELICIE

Er...

CORENTIN

Hey Camenbert breath! You are talking to the Panther...

Corentin takes his free hand, spits solemnly in it and holds it out to Felicie who looks at it, disgusted.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

You can trust me.

FELICIE

[Low voice] I'm Camille Le Haut.

CORENTIN

Who?

FELICIE

Camille Le Haut. The one who broke my music box. Er... She wanted to apologize so she gave me a letter that allowed her in to the Opera.

He looks her in the eye.

CORENTIN

Liar..

Corentin jumps off the bus. Felicie follows.

FELICIE

No.

CORENTIN

Yes... when you're lying, your nose shivers.

Corentin walks down an alley.

FELICIE

Argghhhh! You're exhausting...

Felicie follows. As she does she passes a guy who is conveniently selling Ear-trumpets. As she shouts they act like megaphones, so everyone hears....

[Through trumpets]I stole her identity! Happy?

People in the alley look round as that last comment is magnified by the ear-trumpets. Felicie winces. Corentin, looks at her [through the trumpets], impressed...

CORENTIN

Cool.... You know, what really matters isn't what you steal but who you steal it from.

They arrive in front of a closed warehouse with imposing wooden doors.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

Here we are!! Ta-da!!!!

FELICIE

Wooo-hoo! Doors!

CORENTIN

Not just any doors.... The doors to the atelier of my new boss. Engineer. Genius. And I am his assistant!

Corentin stands proudly in front his doors. He taps them.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

Yes sir. If you saw what was behind these doors I would have to kill you.

As Corentin does a karate chop to show her how, the door [nudged by his tap] opens behind him. Felicie sees it and steps past him.

FELICIE

Looks like you're going to have to kill me skunk.

Corentin follows her inside nervously.

INT. EIFFEL'S STUDIO/WAREHOUSE - DAY

Felicie enters and her mouth drops...there in front of her is the huge outstretched hand section of the Statue of Liberty. [Along with other sections we cannot quite see]

FELICIE

Wow! What is that?

CORENTIN

The Statue of PUBERTY!

Felicie looks at it.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

But it is a super secret so you DID. NOT. SEE. IT. Okay?

FELICIE
[mocking] Okay!

Corentin ushers her towards a glass walled office in one side.

CORENTIN
So, here's my office. The home of BIG ideas and genius.

He opens the door and Felicie walks in...

INT. EIFFEL'S STUDIO - DAY

The atelier of Corentin's new boss is filled with models, sculptures, drawings and tools.

CORENTIN
Here I am respected and understood.

He leans, cockily, on a framed blueprint on the wall. The picture moves and he slides down the wall. He bounces back up before Felicie can see.

While he is out of shot, Felicie has seen a big pair of goggles on the desk. She reaches out to them.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)
At the moment my boss and I are working closely together on several important projects.

Corentin starts to walk past Eiffel's desk and lifts up a spring loaded measuring tool. He starts to fiddle with it: the spring shuts tight and his finger is caught. He tries to get it out and still look cool.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)
I am indispensable.

He pulls the ruler off and it flies off and smashes a maquette of the Eiffel tower [early version.] Corentin sees he has broken something and tries to stick it back together again. And hence makes the Eiffel tower as we know it.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)
I am like the son he never had...well he actually has a son, Soooo...I'm like the son he had but didn't want...No! I mean he likes me!

FELICIE turns: she has the goggles on.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)
Ahhhhhh!

Corentin is truly shocked and steps backwards. His foot goes into a waste paper bin [raffia] and gets jammed. He tries to shake it off in a dance, when Felicie is not looking. Felicie examines all the plans and tools.

FELICIE

Do you now how to use all this stuff?

Corentin sits at the big desk.

CORENTIN

Technically... no. But here is my chair. Not just any chair, this baby swivels...

He shows Felicie a chair. He lifts his legs in the air and spins in the chair...[aiming to put his feet on the desk] Instead his feet [the bin has gone] slide across the desk and knock all the stuff off. He scrabbles to pick the stuff up.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

My day is filled with creativity. My boss and I have a morning coffee together. He has sugar. I do not. We talk ideas and inventions and dreams. He laughs. I laugh. It is a meeting of minds.

As Corentin brags, a door opens and a dumpy fat boy enters carrying a huge pile of rolled blueprints. [This is Mathurin, doughnut made boy, with a lisp, but an obsessively organized mind.] Mathurin sees Corentin. Corentin takes Felicie's hand and tries to make her leave.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

So time to go. [To Felicie] He is the cleaner. He is two sandwiches short of a picnic...

MATHURIN

[With lisp] Hey! Corentin. The pencils all need sharpening and the boss wants us to polish his boots for tomorrow.

Mathurin dumps the blueprints, pushes his glasses back up his nose and waddles out.

FELICIE

So you and your big boss share a coffee huh?

CORENTIN

Technically... yes. Although he is drinking it and I am making it. But it's a start!

He grins. Felicie is impressed and smiles back.

FELICIE

Hey! You were right skunk. Dreams can come true!!!

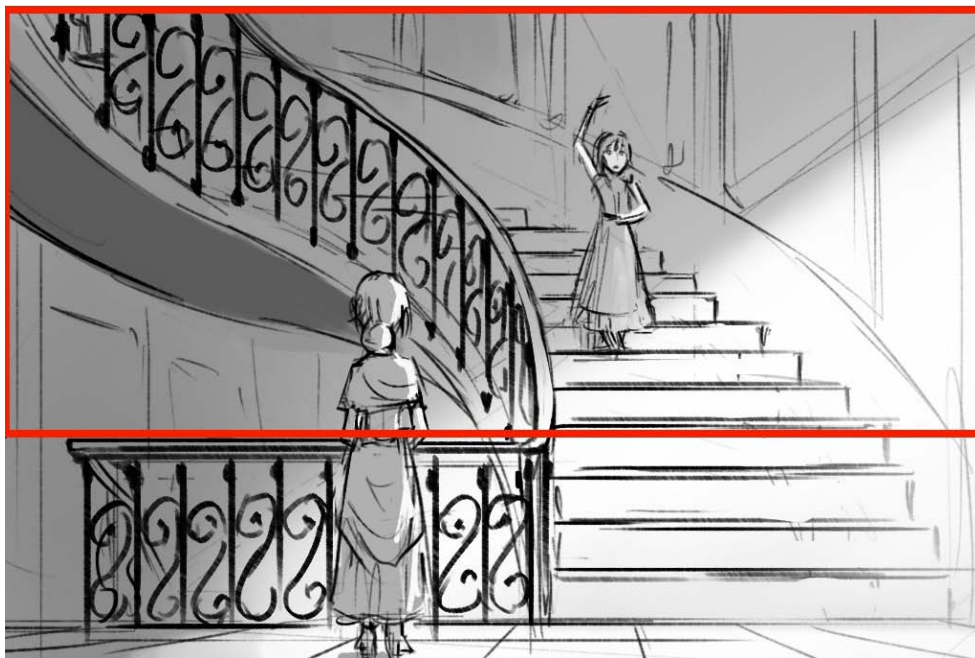
They both smile into each others eyes for a single second. Corentin takes his chance and lifts his arm around Felicie's shoulder. Felicie spots the clock.

FELICIE (CONT'D)
Whoops, Late for training! See you!

Corentin's arm finds empty space as Felicie runs off.

INT. LE HAUT BUILDING- STAIRS - DAY

The Le Haut stairs from the middle of the stairs. Felicie is on the stairs, she jumps up the stairs changing positions.



ODETTE
[O/S] First Position. Second. Third. Fourth. Fifth. Jump!
Jump! 2 up. 2 down. First...second...[etc]!

As Odette barks instructions Felicie is red faced and breathless she has done this all the way up the stairs. Felicie strikes Fifth position.

ODETTE (CONT'D)
And pose! And SMILE!

Felicie manages a totally fake smile.

ODETTE (CONT'D)

Your core must be strong. You dance from there.
Without physical strength you are nothing. Again!

Felicie cannot believe it. She is about to give a sarcastic answer when...CUT

INT. LE HAUT BUILDING- MIRRORS - DAY

Felicie stands by the Le Haut mirrors. Odette hands her a polishing cloth.

ODETTE

Polish!

Felicie starts to polish. She does some 'Wax on wax off' polishing. Odette snorts.

ODETTE (CONT'D)

With your feet.

Felicie snorts, then sees that Odette means it. She tentatively tries to clean the mirrors by raising her legs gracefully. It is difficult, but she fixes her face and really tries.

EXT. LE HAUT BUILDING-COURT - DAY

Felicie is standing by a barrel and a washing line in the court

ODETTE

Hang out the washing. Balance on the barrel.

Felicie gets on to the barrel and wobbles. As she tries to hang washing. She can't quite reach the washing line. As she stretches...

ODETTE (CONT'D)

Oh, you might need to stand on your toes...

Felicie tries to hang the washing on points. She glares at Odette and is about to say 'this is stupid' when the barrel slips from under her and she ends up with her face in a pair of big knickers. Beat. She sees Odette watching her. Then she fixes her face and tries again.

INT. ODETTE'S LODGE - NIGHT

Odette massages, clicks and bends Felicie's toes. We can't see Felicie, just her feet being pulled and twisted.

ODETTE

You need to try harder. Your balance must be pinpoint accurate. For dance you need to have the strength of a bull... and your toes are stiff.

We hear snores and see that Felicie is exhausted and asleep. Odette shows a glimmer of a warm grin. Then tickles Felicie's toe to make her start awake.

INT. OPERA/AUDITION ROOM - DAY

In the next audition we PAN down a line of feet doing points. The last pair belong to Felicie: she is much better and can actually balance and be on her toes. Merante watches her.

ELLIPSE: the girls are in a line.

MERANTE

[To other girl] There is a bright future for you...as a candle seller...

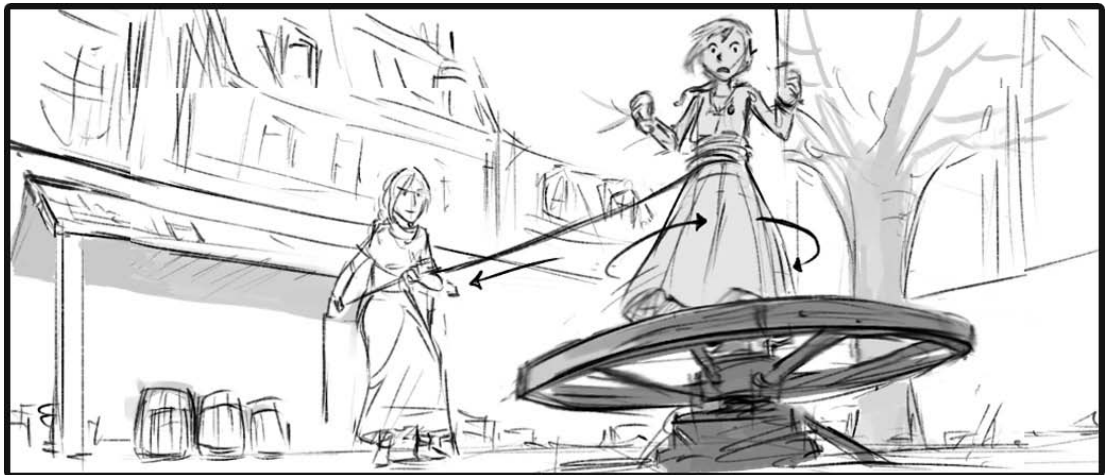
The girl leaves the class. In the balcony Rudolph applauds Felicie. She grins at him.

EXT. LE HAUT BUILDING-COURT - DAY

Felicie is holding a glass of water in each hand.

ODETTE

[O/S] To turn effectively you must become the mistress of your dizziness.



PULL OUT to see that Felicie has a cord around her waist. She is also on a sideways cartwheel. Her feet are balanced on the hub in the middle. Odette spins the cord really fast and Felicie goes round and round.

ANGLE ON: here swivelling POV of the world.

ANGLE ON her eyes swivelling in their sockets.

Odette stops spinning her then gestures for Felicie to walk towards her. Felicie looks at Odette and moves forwards....but smashes out of shot to the side.

EXT. PYRAMIDES SQUARE - DAY

Odette knocks Felicie into the perfect pose, by shaping her with her cane. Poke! Push! Crack! Felicie is increasingly contorted into an inch perfect pose like a puppet. Her face gets angrier and angrier.

ODETTE

Your poses must be inch perfect. And to be perfect each muscle must be engaged.

One last point with the cane. A little finger out of place. Click!

ODETTE (CONT'D)

And hold!

Felicie tries to hold the pose. A pigeon lands on her arm. Beat. The pigeon and Felicie eye one another.

Felicie is about to speak another sarcastic line when...

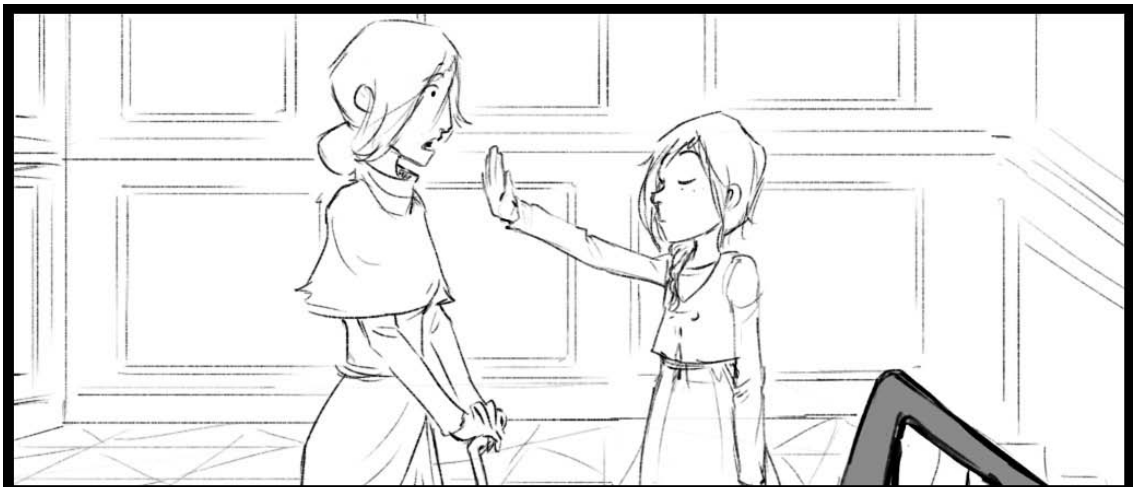
It poops.

Felicie grimaces, but holds the pose. Odette barely hides her snigger.

INT. LE HAUT BUILDING- STAIRS - DAY

Felicie now dances up the Le Haut staircase with more agility, turning her legs in and out and being much more light and graceful. Now she is naturally grinning and enjoying herself.

At the top Odette is about to speak, when Felicie, stops her with a hand, smiles and heads back down the stairs doing the same thing. Odette is impressed.



INT. LE HAUT BUILDING- MIRRORS - DAY

Similarly Felicie can now raise her leg higher up the mirrors to clean them. She watches Odette, who gestures even higher. Felicie pushes her leg even higher up the glass. More in pain, but hiding it with a fake smile. As her leg cleans some grease Camille is revealed in the reflection.

CAMILLE

Little rat, these things at the end of your arms are called hands...

Odette and Felicie look sheepish as Felicie's leg slides down the mirror to the floor.

INT. OPERA/AUDITION ROOM - DAY

Merante watches as the class all do quick leg positions [turn in and turn out] at the barre. Felicie is quick and precise.

ELLIPSE: Merante stands over a sobbing girl.

MERANTE

Try to introduce your left foot to your right foot. See if they can one day get along.

He makes a bye-bye sign.

EXT. LE HAUT BUILDING/COURTYARD - DAY

ANGLE on Felicie's swivelling vision of the world again. Felicie is being spun by Odette again with the glasses of water. This time Felicie manages a few dizzy steps towards Odette.... But then loses it throws the glass of water over Odette.

Now Felicie giggles. Odette looks stern.

INT. LE HAUT BUILDING- STAIRS - DAY

Felicie is now on her own. She delivers the letters up the stairs. She is now leaping, turning, dancing and really showing off her skills. She is not tired in the least and full of joy. [A Singing In The Rain dance]

EXT. LE HAUT BUILDING-COURT - DAY

Felicie is being spun again. This time she smiles confidently. She walks in a straight line up to Odette. She drinks the water.

She is about to make a victorious comment...Then she faints out of shot.

INT. OPERA/AUDITION ROOM - DAY

One by one we see the girls make turns and move their heads. Merante watches as Felicie turns and does not get dizzy. He nods.

MERANTE

[To another girl: DORA/Nora] There is the exit. Use it!

Beat. Nora stares at the exit.

DORA/NORA

What for?

EXT. LE HAUT BUILDING-COURT - DAY

PAN along a line of perfectly hung washing. Felicie is balancing on the barrel in the court on points and hanging up some corsets.

Odette watches her.

ODETTE

Smile.

Felicie smiles.

ODETTE (CONT'D)

Now give me anger...

Felicie gives an angry face.

ODETTE (CONT'D)

Now puzzled...jealous, sad, happy shocked, irritated, in love, frightened, excited, dying...

Felicie does them one after the other with perfect balance. Odette stares.

ODETTE (CONT'D)

Now some loving, jealous puzzled happy, anger...

This is too much for Felicie, who loses her balance and plummets out of shot. Odette looks pleased.

INT. LE HAUT BUILDING- MIRRORS - DAY

Felicie polishes the mirrors with her hands, but is then able to bend her leg right back over her shoulder to polish another bit. It is effortless. [Or she cleans a window with her two hands as Odette watches, but then her foot cleans too.]

EXT. PONT NEUF - DAY

At the end of the day: almost silhouetted, Odette limps across the bridge. Felicie leaps along the balustrade, reaching further and looking more graceful. They reach the end of the bridge. Felicie looks into Odette's face.

ODETTE

You are.....better.

Felicie grins, punches the air, and does one more big leap. The leap becomes..

INT. OPERA/AUDITION ROOM - DAY

The leaps across the floor of the audition room.

ELLIPSE: Merante humphs as he passes by Felicie and eliminates a girl, who exits. Marie-Clementine grins at Felicie, they high five and bang bottoms. Rudolph sees... There are now only 5 girls left.

EXT. LES HALLES - DAY

Odette, Felicie and this time Corentin walk towards Les Halles.

FELICIE

This is Corentin. We escaped from the orphanage together.

Corentin does his best grown-up man walk..

CORENTIN

Well technically I escaped and you copied me. It was my plan. [To Odette] Hello, I'm loving your bonnet.

He sucks up the flesh on Odette's hand.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

By the way, you can call me the Panther!

He strikes his pose. Odette is stony faced.

ODETTE

I'd say that was more squirrel.

Corentin laughs it off.

CORENTIN

Pretty AND witty. Nice combo madame.

ODETTE

[Off hand] Does he have the plague?

FELICIE

No, just a soap allergy and a small brain.

Odette stares at him.

ODETTE

Don't interfere and you can stay.

Corentin looks innocent and non-interfering.

INT. LES HALLES MARKET/IRONWORK ROOF - DAY

ANGLE ON: Corentin's face as he tries not to look petrified as he peers down on the crowded market below. Odette looks at Felicie.

ODETTE

[To Felicie] You know what to do...

Felicie attaches the cord to her waist.

FELICIE

I think this time you'll notice the improvement.

Felicie centres herself, takes aim and leaps...she lands on the girder. Smiles. Then loses her balance and falls out of shot. THWACK: the sound of girl hitting cheese.

Odette and Corentin look down at her.

CORENTIN

Ah! Now the cheesy smell makes sense.

Odette pulls Felicie back up, like a sack of potatoes.

ODETTE

Felicie tells me you are going to a Breton evening tonight?

CORENTIN

Yep.

ODETTE

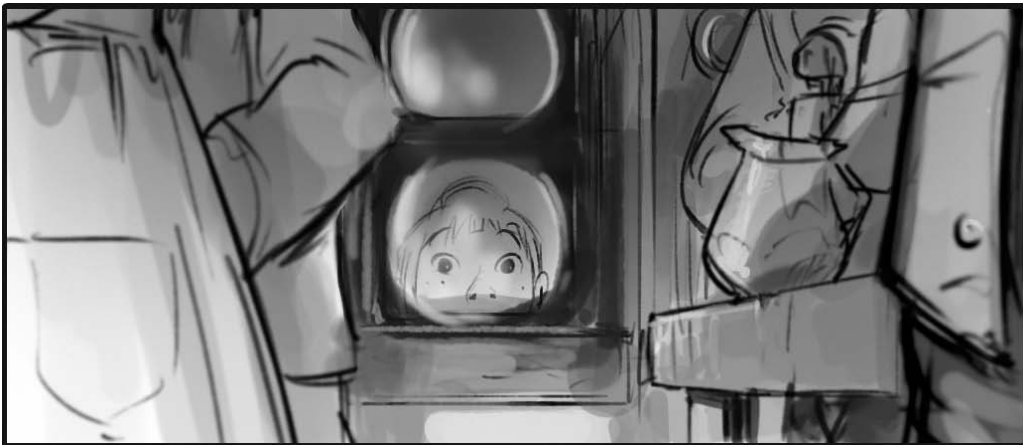
Bring her back late and you will be six inches smaller.

CORENTIN

Oh don't you worry...it's a quiet...sober...quiet...thing.

EXT. STREET TO BRETON BAR - NIGHT

Outside the Breton bar in the street. The music is muffled. This really could be a nice quiet thing...but no! A guy is ejected through the door and the noise and smoke fill the air.



INT. BRETON BAR - NIGHT

The bar is in full, noisy, un-sober swing. There is dancing, there is singing, there are smoke rings. Feet stamp and glasses are banged on tables.



The orchestra plays wild and lively Breton music. Mathurin is playing crazy violin with the band. He is on a chair so he is the same height as the adults.

At one table we see a hand NOTATING the dance on the stage with swift movements of the pen. Whoever is doing this is in shadow.

Corentin and Felicie stand at the door of the bar. Corentin waves at Mathurin, who is playing fiddle by the stage. Felicie hears the beat and grins a big wide grin at Corentin.

FELICIE
Breton music!



She grabs Corentin and pulls him towards the music, already beginning to dance.

FELICIE (CONT'D)
I love it here! Let's party!!!!

Felicie breaks away from Corentin and lets the music sweep her away. Corentin watches her for a second.

CORENTIN
[Shouting to be heard over the music] Did you say you loved me or the bar?

But Felicie is already lost in the music. She gestures for him to dance too. Corentin dances in a crazy punchy boy style. The music gets more energetic. Felicie spins Corentin around and then her dancing gets crazier and crazier, Slowly all other dancing stops and all eyes are on her.

Felicie jumps onto a table and then onto the bar as the music gets more furious and punky. Felicie high kicks her way down the bar as the crowd egg her on. At the end of the bar Felicie kicks her foot so that the candle on a table goes out but also send the notebook we saw earlier flying.

The figure leans forwards. It is Merante!!!! Felicie stops in her tracks.

MERANTE

I hope that tomorrow, you act with a little more dignity!

Felicie lowers her eyes.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

Anyway, tonight was a good performance.

Beat. Felicie looks up and smiles.

EXT. PONT NEUF/QUAI - NIGHT

An overjoyed Felicie, rushes across the Pont Neuf, followed by Corentin.

FELICIE

(Shouting)

Wooooooooooooooooooooo!

CORENTIN

(Shouting)

Wooooooooooooo! I have no idea why you are happy but it's great!

EXT. OUTSIDE LE HAUT BUILDING - NIGHT

Felicie and Corentin arrive in front of the Le Haut building, out of breath.

FELICIE

Well...I'd better go in... I've got my audition tomorrow.

CORENTIN

Course. Sleep well. And...I...

Corentin smiles at her.

FELICIE

What?

CORENTIN

I...you...I...I think you're a...you're great.

FELICIE

(un-nerved.)

Thanks.

She smiles at him. Corentin moves his head closer to hers. He closes his eyes and puckers his lips. Felicie watches this, puzzled.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

Corentin opens one eye..

CORENTIN

Er....nothing, I'm stretching.

Corentin makes fake stretching moves. They go on too long.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

Okay! It's best if I leave.

FELICIE

Right.

Felicie opens the door. Corentin walks off, mumbling to himself how stupid he has been.

FELICIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(Just at the door)

Corentin!

CORENTIN

(Turning)

Uh-huh

FELICIE

I had....the best time. Thanks.

She smiles at him.

CORENTIN

My pleasure Mademoiselle Felicie. Oh Sorry... Camille
Le Haut.

They share a look. Corentin bows and walks off, happier.

Felicie enters the court. She does not see Camille in the shadows. She has heard everything.

Corentin walks down the road. He smiles. Does a celebratory Panther move and then runs towards home full of joy.

INT. ODETTE'S LODGE - MORNING

Felicie, still half asleep, opens the shutters.

EXT. LE HAUT BUILDING/COURTYARD - MORNING (SNOW)

The courtyard is covered with thick white snow. Felicie discovers this sight with wonder.

EXT. STREET TO ODETTÉ'S LODGE - DAY (SNOW)

Felicie walks to the Opera. The pedestrians are slipping, the shopkeepers sweep the floor, the hackneys are paralysed under the snow. She is laughing with joy.

EXT. OPERA/STREET - DAY (SNOW)

Felicie enters in the building which looks today like a giant white cake.

INT. OPERA/CORRIDOR 4 - DAY

Felicie scoots, now in her ballet costume up to the door of the classroom. She rushes to the door and without thinking bursts in...

INT. OPERA/AUDITION ROOM - DAY

...to find the stern disapproving faces of Regine Le Haut, Albert Le Haut, Camille and Merante in the classroom. Rudolph is in the balcony along with the rest.

REGINE LE HAUT

Wretch! I want her put in prison!

CAMILLE

She stole my life! My honour and my name! I want it back!

She sobs and poses for the onlookers.

REGINE LE HAUT

[In whisper to Camille] Don't push it!

CAMILLE

Okay!

Camille tones down her despair. Merante steps forwards.

MERANTE

What is your name?

Felicie lowers her head.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

I said what is your name?

Felicie does not speak.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

For the last time. What is your name?

Beat. Felicie has tears in her eyes.

FELICIE

(proud)

My name is Felicie Milliner. I come from Le Guilvinec...
In Brittany.

MERANTE

Where are your parents?

Felicie remains quiet and looks down. Merante nods. Her class mates gasp. Regine fumes. Camille sobs for effect, checking her upset reflection in the mirror.

FELICIE

But I didn't steal her name! I just borrowed it!

ALBERT

See! She just borrowed it...

Regine and Camille scream in united anger. At this moment Odette walks in. All hell breaks loose.

REGINE LE HAUT

[To Odette] You! Traitor! You stab me in the back! You are sacked!

CAMILLE

And I want the little rat sent to an orphanage to learn her lesson!

Felicie pleads with Merante and Albert.

FELICIE

Odette had nothing to do with this. It was me. I did it. I did it all. She did not know...[To Regine] Please don't sack her...

REGINE LE HAUT

Liar! This is a conspiracy! The Le Haut name has been smirched...

ALBERT
BE smirched dear....

Regine Le Haut screams in frustration. Everyone speaks at once. Merante looks overwhelmed.

MERANTE
SILENCE! SHHHHHTTTTT!

Everyone shuts up. Merante makes eye contact with everyone.

MERANTE (CONT'D)
I am the director of Dance. I am the big cheese. I will
decide this matter. And to do that I will need a moment
for contemplation.

Everyone is silent as Merante thinks. He walks away from the group, muttering. The whole
room, including the balcony lean forwards to hear.

He turns, as if to speak. Then changes his mind and turns back again and mumbles. Finally he
spins round.

MERANTE (CONT'D)
Like it or lump it here is my deal. Accept these
conditions or leave. Miss Le Haut.

Camille curtseys and bats her lashes.

MERANTE (CONT'D)
You may enter the Coryphees class starting tomorrow.
And you will also be in the auditions for the part in La
Korriganne.

Camille squeals with pleasure. Regine enjoys her victory. Merante turns on Felicie. Felicie
prepares for the worst. She reaches out and takes Odette's hand. Odette is shocked, but lets it
stay there.

MERANTE (CONT'D)
You... You made a terrible start to the classes. You
lacked grace, charm and elegance. A dog in a blindfold
could dance better than you.

Felicie nods.

MERANTE (CONT'D)
BUT. Since then you have shown great promise.

He glances at Odette and grins.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

You must have a good teacher.

Odette looks at her feet.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

So you too will go on auditioning for the part.

Felicie smiles the biggest widest grin of her life. Camille screams. He father holds her back.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

IF you get the part in La Korrigane fair and square, you can stay at the Opera. IF you fail to get the part then Madame Le Haut can have you back to do with what she wants.

Regine looks triumphant.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

Madame Le Haut. IF you sack Odette, I will sack Camille. IS that totally clear?

Regine fumes, but then nods.

REGINE LE HAUT

Clear...

MERANTE

Then Felicie Milliner from Le Guilvinec. The future is in your hands. Work hard.

Felicie nods. A huge task in the offing. She looks up to the balcony. Rudolph is there. He nods his approval and winks. Felicie grins.

EXT. STREET OF RIVOLI - DAY (SNOW)

The Le Haut carriage jolts and slides home through snowy Paris.

INT. LE HAUT CARRIAGE - DAY (SNOW)

Regine is furious. Camille is angry too, but looking at herself doing it in the carriage windows.

REGINE LE HAUT

I am going to crush her! I'm going to crush her and eat her for breakfast! I'm going to crush her, eat her and then spit her puny, little peasant bones out!

Regine mock spits.

REGINE LE HAUT (CONT'D)

Just get that part! For the sake of your dearly departed
Father and our family name!

Camille does not look at herself anymore. She lowers her head.

CAMILLE

I won't lose.

ALBERT

Just try your best sweetness crumble pie.

REGINE LE HAUT

Stop! Failure is out of the question. I want vengeance! I
WILL GET IT!

The carriage continues on it's way as Camille watches her mother rant.

INT. OPERA/AUDITORIUM STAGE - DAY

Odette cleans the stage. She gets centre stage and looks out at the auditorium. A smile lights up
her face. Then clouds over.

MERANTE

Do you miss it?

His voice has come from the stalls. He appears from the shadows and walks up onto the stage.
Odette carries on cleaning.

ODETTE

[wistful] What do you think?

Merante looks out at the seats with her.

MERANTE

I think you clean this place because you cannot bear to
be away.

ODETTE

No maestro. I clean because I must eat.

She starts to mop again. Merante watches her.

MERANTE

You even make mopping look graceful.

Odette blushes and turns her back on him.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

I knew it was your hand teaching Felicie. She moves like you.

ODETTE

Humph. Then she is doomed. But.... You Spoke up for me... so... you know...

MERANTE

Yes. I know.

She mops. Merante grabs the broom and for a second their hands touch. Odette moves her hand.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

It will be fine. Felicie has a good teacher. And a good Professor.

ODETTE

She's a good girl, I don't want her to lose.

Merante smiles at her.

MERANTE

You don't want her to lose or you don't want to lose her.

She smiles back.

He moves closer. She looks him in the eyes. Then the huge curtains swish shut, parting them. The moment is gone.

EXT. LE HAUT BUILDING/COURTYARD - DAY (SNOW)

The snow is falling fast. Regine clears herself a path and knocks on Odette's lodge door. Camille picks her way through the snow after her.

Odette opens the door. Felicie is there too.

REGINE LE HAUT

There is snow in the court. Clear it!

CAMILLE

Right now!

ODETTE

But it's snowing...

Regine smirks.

REGINE LE HAUT

I want that court clear. It's an order.

She sweeps off. Camille giggles.

REGINE LE HAUT (CONT'D)

There are going to be a lot of chores to do around the place from now on.

CAMILLE

Poor Felicie! That means you might not have much time to practice for the audition.

Regine and Camille leave, laughing.

REGINE LE HAUT

You're still pushing it

CAMILLE

Ok

ODETTE

(to Felicie)

Don't worry, we can practice while we work.

EXT. LE HAUT BUILDING/COURTYARD - DAY (SNOW)

In the courtyard, Felicie and Odette each have their broom.

ODETTE

It's all in the hip. Lean on your legs and twirl. Start again.

Felicie places the broomstick vertically, leans on her legs and launches herself. She swirls around the broomstick while holding it. But not enough. She kicks snow in the air.

ODETTE (CONT'D)

Come on. It's not complicated.

Now Odette places the broomstick vertically and launches herself, she swirls with grace and seems to glide. Felicie is dumbstruck.

FELICIE

Wow.

Odette lands, perfectly, but grimaces and nurses her hip.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

Are you ok?

ODETTE

Yes... Your turn!

FELICIE

So you WERE a dancer...

ODETTE

Yes Brain of Breton. Of course I was a dancer. How do you think I'm training you.

FELICIE

(realising)

Ahhhhhh....that's how you know Merante.

ODETTE

Yes..Come on, start again.

FELICIE

But how did...that happen?

She points at Odette's leg.

ODETTE

No more questions. Come on, we start over.

Felicie smiles.

ODETTE (CONT'D)

What?

FELICIE

The Merante thing. I get it now. The way he looks at you.

Felicie pulls a love-struck face. Odette blushes.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

Oh my word! You LIKE him too!

ODETTE

Rubbish!

FELICIE

The cleaner and the Director of Dance!

ODETTE

It's not like that! End of discussion. Listen to me, we're talking about your future here...

Odette, limping, circles Felicie.

ODETTE (CONT'D)

You only have one opponent: Camille.

INT. OPERA/AUDITION ROOM - DAY

Felicie gets beaten to the door by Camille to enter the audition room first. She is upset.

ODETTE (OFF)

I have seen her, I know her. Her technique is perfect.

INT. OPERA/AUDITION ROOM - DAY

Camille finishes dancing in front of Merante, Felicie and the others. She is perfect. Everybody claps.

Merante points at DORA. It's over for her. Only Felicie, Camille and Marie-Clementine are left in the competition.

ODETTE (OFF)

She is precise. She is sharp. If you try to take her down on her turf, you will fail.

EXT. LE HAUT BUILDING/COURTYARD - DAY

Felicie performs one technical move after another while Odette watches her. She's suffering from the cold.

ODETTE (OFF)

On top of this, you lacked milk in your childhood and your bones are weak...

INT. ODETTE'S LODGE - NIGHT

Odette is rubbing Felicie's feet who's in pain. Next to her, Corentin is trying to rub the other. Felicie giggles as it tickles and kicks her leg out, sending Corentin flying out of shot.

ODETTE (OFF)

Because your diet suffers from eating very little meat, your muscles feel like marshmallow. In short, on paper, you're gonna get humiliated.

INT. OPERA/AUDITION ROOM - DAY

Felicie and Camille are both trying to enter the audition room before the other. They find themselves both stuck in the door frame.

FELICIE [O/S]

Great pep talk. So how do I get the part?

ODETTE (OFF)

You get the part because you have something she'll never have... instinct.

EXT. OPERA/STREET - DAY

Odette sweeps the entrance to the opera. She watches Felicie perform one move after another on the steps, all executed with perfect grace.

On the steps Corentin sits and eats chestnuts. He throws the shell on the steps as Odette sweeps. She scowls and he clears them up quickly.

Felicie dances to the top of the stairs. Like Rocky.

ODETTE (OFF)

Every note, every sound, every harmony needs to have your body vibrating from the end of your hair to the tip of your toes. You need to live the music, feel it.

INT. OPERA/AUDITION ROOM - DAY

Camille reaches the door of the audition room. But at the last second Felicie slides through her legs in a graceful pose, stands and enters the classroom first. Camille is furious.

ODETTE (OFF)

Each one of your moves, each one of your entrechats, arabesques need to tell a story, and that's where you're gonna hurt her bad.

INT. LES HALLES MARKET/IRONWORK ROOF - NIGHT

Felicie stands alone on the girders of the market. She looks at the drop and the height. She is about to jump, then re-thinks and then removes the rope around her waist.

She leaps. Lands perfectly...

ANGLE ON: Shot from Les Halles floor where we see her jump from beam to beam. Cut from her overjoyed face to...

INT. OPERA/AUDITION ROOM - DAY

Her face as Felicie finishes dancing in front of Merante, Rosita, Camille and the others. Felicie stops, panting. Silence.

ODETTE (OFF)

You are not dancing... you are dance.

Merante smiles.

MERANTE

Alright- all three candidates please step forward.

Felicie, Camille and Marie-Clementine come forward, forming a line.

Rosita and Merante whisper into to each other's ears. Merante walks in front of them, hesitating. Suspense is at its height.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

The person leaving us today is....

Tense music starts...Merante hears it and turns to see Noiret the pianist playing. He stops when he sees Merante glaring.

He stops in front of Camille.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

Camille...

She gulps.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

You are in the final audition.

Camille celebrates by looking shocked and cocky at the same time in all the mirrors.

Marie-Clementine and Felicie share a look and hold hands.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

This is the end of the road, Miss Valade.

Marie-Clementine winks to Felicie and leaves the room.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

Camille and Felicie. Tomorrow morning at 8am, we will know which one of you will have the honour of dancing the choreography which I have created with our Etoile, Rosita Mauri...

Camille and Felicie look daggers at each other.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

I can only advise you to give everything ladies.

Merante sweeps out of the room. Camille drops her sweet face and turns to Felicie with venom.

CAMILLE

You have made lots of progress dirty little rat. But tomorrow, I am going to be the chosen one.

Camille poses in the mirrors and blows her many perfect reflections a kiss.

FELICIE

The only thing you'll win is second place.

Camille turns around and fixes Felicie.

CAMILLE

Don't be insolent, you can't afford it. You can train, steal my identity, you will always be a stinking Breton sardine.

Tears well up in Felicie's eyes.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

I must be dreaming, you are sad... Are you going to whine in your mummy's arms? Oh sorry, I forgot, you don't have a mummy anymore.

Felicie clenches her fists. Camille leans towards her.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

You will never be a lady. Ever.

Felicie looks at her reflection. She is one. Camille is many.

Camille walks away, watching herself go. Felicie takes this in. Rudolph arrives.

RUDOLPH

Something wrong baboushka?

FELICIE

No no, all good.

RUDOLPH

Are you up for a little adventure in Paris?

FELICIE

I have to train.

RUDOLPH

Training is useless. It is attitude that will win you the part tomorrow. Come.

Felicie takes a last look in the mirror and then follows Rudolph.

EXT. PONT NEUF/QUAY/FROZEN SEINE - DAY

Rudolph and Felicie are sitting on the edge of the river bank. The horses steam with exertion. The Seine is frozen.

Rudolph and Felicie finish putting on their ice skates.

FELICIE
I've never ice skated before.

RUDOLPH
It's never too late to start.

Rudolph launches himself on the ice, he skates virtuously while Felicie can barely stand up on the ice. He dances like a Cossack.

RUDOLPH (CONT'D)
Come on Baboushka!

She can barely stand on her feet, she tries to move forward but keeps wobbling, her legs parting and parting without her being able to control anything.

Rudolph skates towards her and takes her by the hands, trying to show her the gist of it. With Felicie back on track, Rudolph carries her away in a dance, and as if by magic they find themselves...

INT. STAGE OPERA - DAY

...Rudolph and Felicie are dancing on the stage dressed in their ballet outfits. It becomes more and more beautiful and intense, and as a final climax he lifts her up and throws her in a swirl so that she spins in the air with utmost grace.

EXT. PONT NEUF/QUAY/FROZEN SEINE - DAY

Back to reality. Felicie, with a dreamy dream-face, flies through the air. Then she opens her eyes... uh-oh, She is not on the stage, she is in the air, spinning and spinning.

Her dreamy look a fades and a look of panic replaces it.

She realises that she is about to land on her skates. Panic reads on her face, the spinning becomes shaky and she finally lands like a bomb, right through the ice.

Rudolph fishes her out of the water, laughing. Rudolph takes her in his arms. They look at each other intensely.

RUDOLPH
Only one thing left to do.

FELICIE
[Quivering and anticipating a kiss] What?

Their faces come close, Felicie closes her eyes, awaiting a kiss.

RUDOLPH
Shopping.

Felicie opens her eyes immediately.

FELICIE
Of course.

INT. DRESS SHOP - DAY

Rudolph lounges on a chaise watching Felicie trying on outfits. She is shepherdess, she is greek goddess, she is big wiggled lady...

RUDOLPH
I like them all! Divine!

FELICIE
Divine?

Rudolph nods. Felicie is carried away. The assistant bows obsequiously.

RUDOLPH
(to Felicie) And you must have shoes also!!! You want a hat? You Must have a hat. And gloves! And new ballet shoes... the best.

The shop assistant comes back with a pair of sparkling ballet shoes. Felicie is mesmerised.

RUDOLPH (CONT'D)
Exquisite, darling! (To the shop assistant)Put them on the family account! And have them delivered to the Opera.

The shop assistant bows even lower. Rudolph looks at Felicie.

RUDOLPH (CONT'D)
Baboushka! You look like a million francs. And tonight we shall party. Somewhere spectacular. Me, you and some like minded rebels...

Felicie looks at herself in the mirror. She grins. Like Camille she now has many reflections. She enjoys looking at herself.

RUDOLPH (CONT'D)

Unless that is, you still want to train...

She looks at Rudolph. Rudolph shakes his head.

FELICIE

Training is for dullards. Tonight I want to be a LADY.

RUDOLPH

Bravo! 'Etoile' means star... not boring!

Felicie giggles.

EXT. STREET TO ODETTE'S LODGE - EVENING

Corentin leans on a wall. He has Felicie's music box in his hands: it has been fixed. The snow is falling in flurries around him.

CORENTIN

[Practicing] Felicie...I fixed your box. No! Felicie, it gives me great pleasure to return to you... No... Felicie, guess how clever I am!

He can't help turn the handle. It plays a very out of tune version of La Korrigane. He shakes it, there is still a loose part. He stuffs the music box back into this pocket.

Felicie rushes past him towards Odette's. She is dressed in her finery. Corentin does a double take.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

Wow... you look...

FELICIE

Thank you Darling.

CORENTIN

Darling?

Felicie snorts at him. Corentin walks alongside her.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

My boss finally spoke to me! He said 'get off my foot you biological mutation'. That's good right?

FELICIE

That's... perfect!

Felicie glares at him.

CORENTIN

Now we're technically colleagues, I'm going to tell him all about my idea for a set of cups that you put on your ears that play music. I'm calling them musical-lugholes

Felicie steps over a snowy puddle, Corentin just walks right through it.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

Where've you been anyway?

FELICIE

With Rudi.

Corentin stops in his tracks.

CORENTIN

Huh. Rudi? Rudi? Rudi who? Like on a date?

Felicie looks at him and snorts.

FELICIE

Silly silly skunk... A date? Rebels do not follow the herd...

CORENTIN

Unless it's a herd of rebels...

FELICIE

Rudolph happens to be EXTRAORDINARY. He knows how to make a person feel special.

Felicie walks off. Corentin scratches his crazy hair.

CORENTIN

I'm extraordinary too! I'm a panther. An inventing panther...

FELICIE

Rudi is ALSO a gentleman...

Corentin watches her swan off.

CORENTIN

Okay You win! I'll be the most gentlemanly gentleman you've ever been... gentlemanned by. You be at the Opera Italia at 6 tonight.

But Felicie has gone into Odette's.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

Is it a yes?

Corentin smiles.

INT. ODETTE'S LODGE - EVENING

Felicie enters. Odette, is by the fire, with her back to Felicie.

ODETTE

You are late.

FELICIE

I know but...

Odette turns and sees Felicie in her finery. She looks shocked. Then hard.

ODETTE

What is this?

Felicie flings her shopping on the bed.

FELICIE

Presents from Rudolph. Like it?

Felicie curtsey's. Odette snorts.

ODETTE

You look like a clown. Change. We have to practice for tomorrow.

Felicie looks at her bags and starts to get changed.

FELICIE (O.S.)

No more practice! I'm ready, I can feel it.

Felicie disappears behind the room divider. Odette looks worried.

ODETTE

You know, even the greatest dancers work hard, they train everyday.

FELICIE (O.S.)

I'm not a great dancer...

Felicie appears from behind the room divider, posing like a star.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

...I'm Divine!

Odette smiles.

ODETTE

Sit.

Felicie sits beside Odette.

FELICIE

But I have to go!

ODETTE

Sit!

Odette pushes a wrapped parcel towards Felicie. Felicie takes the package and unwraps it. It is the old and worn pair of ballet shoes. Felicie is underwhelmed, but tries to look pleased.

ODETTE (CONT'D)

They were mine... They are worn out because I worked... I trained...

Felicie takes this in.

FELICIE

Thanks, but Rudi already bought me some new ones

She hesitates.

ODETTE

I've been through this, I know exactly how you feel right now.

FELICIE

No you don't.

ODETTE

Stay yourself Felicie. You are... you are a beautiful person....

Felicie snorts and then sees Odette is being genuine.

ODETTE (CONT'D)

Don't forget that. Tomorrow you have your future in your hands...

Odette stares at Felicie. Felicie takes this in. She nods. Odette thinks it has sunk in.

Beat. Felicie stands.

FELICIE

Ok, thanks for the advice, I'll think about it. Gotta go!

Odette stands too, irritated.

ODETTE

Wait! We have to train..

FELICIE

Etoile means star, not boring.

Felicie stares at Odette. Odette stares back, but then hardens again.

ODETTE

Ok. Go!

Felicie puts on her coat and leaves, excited. Odette shakes her head, worried.

INT. DISUSED ITALIAN THEATRE - NIGHT

Corentin lights some candles. PULL OUT to see that he has made a disused, crumbling theatre into a magical, snowy setting for a date. The glow lights up Corentin's face.

CORENTIN

The panther KNOWS about women...

Mathurin's big blinking face is next to his.

MATHURIN

[With lisp] This is actually more than a slight fire risk.
We should have a bucket of water standing by...

Corentin sighs.

CORENTIN

And right there is why you will NEVER get a girlfriend.

Corentin moves away and checks out a table he has laid with rugs, and food.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

Look-ing good. She comes in. I am looking dark and
mysterious.

He pulls his dark and mysterious face.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

She is amazed. You are playing music. She sits. I give her
the flower. I pin it on her. Matty, you were in charge of
the flower...

Corentin clicks his fingers. Behind him Maturin has a bag of flour. Maturin looks down at it...

MATHURIN

I thought you were making a cake...

Corentin looks at the flour and sighs.

CORENTIN

Your job is to make her melt. Tonight Mathurin I want class. I want classical music.

MATHURIN

Er...that's not my musical comfort zone.

CORENTIN

Food, music and her music box. All I need now is the chikidee!

He looks down at Mathurin who SNEEZES and blows out most of the candles.

EXT. CONCORDE SQUARE - NIGHT

Rudolph leads a dressed up Felicie into the Hôtel du Plessis-Bellière. Lights with different colors sparkle through the windows. Felicie sees what is in front of her and GASPS.

FELICIE

Wow! Is this your place?

RUDOLPH

(laughing)

No! It's a friend's place.

FELICIE

It's wonderful.

RUDOLPH

My place is much much bigger.

INT. HOTEL DU PLESSIS-BELLIÈRE - NIGHT

Rudolph and Felicie, walk through a vast room where twenty or so young kids have gathered for a spoilt kids party. They are all wearing masks: cow, billy goat, horse, cat, crane, fox, pig and dancing crazily together in an electric atmosphere. There are mountains of opulent foods of every description.

FELICIE

This is crazy! What are we celebrating?

RUDOLPH

The winter solstice...

Rudolph hands a goat mask to Felicie.

RUDOLPH (CONT'D)

... and your entrance into this world.

FELICIE

I'm not the goat type.

RUDOLPH

You should be, she represents the goddess Koliada. She brings happiness and luck to everyone who touches her...

Felicie smiles and wears the mask on her face. Just then, a small boy wearing a pig mask pokes her in the ribs. Felicie turns around and slaps him in the face. He falls into a table and sends a multi-coloured tiered jelly flying. Rudolph bursts into laughter.

FELICIE

Hands off porky!

RUDOLPH

(to Felicie)

That's my rebel!

Some other kids drink a red drink and smash their glasses on the floor. Red splatters cover the white table linen. A waiter arrives, carrying a tray with glasses on it. He smiles at Felicie.

WAITER

Miss, Sir...

Felicie is touched with such kindness and attention.

RUDOLPH

(to the waiter)

Finally, where were you boy?

Rudolph grabs the two glasses and gives one to Felicie. The waiter, fed up being called boy by a younger man, rolls his eyes.

RUDOLPH (CONT'D)

Cherry juice, brought here in barrels from orchards near St Petersburg...

Rudolph raises his glass.

RUDOLPH (CONT'D)

Na zdarovié!!!

FELICIE
(cheering)
Na gnagnavié.

Rudolph drains his glass and throws it over his shoulder. The glass breaks on the floor, narrowly missing the waiter.

Rudolph then grabs a profiterole from the top of a huge mountain of them.

RUDOLPH
Let's get the party started!

He throws the profiteroles at another teen. Rudolph screams, Felicie explodes with laughter. She also takes a profiterole and throws it at another child, under the stern eyes of the waiter.

INT. DISUSED ITALIAN THEATRE - NIGHT

Later. Corentin has lit the candles again. He places the music box on the table. He moves it from position to position. Finds the perfect place. He puts a napkin over it. And then practises whipping it off.

CORENTIN
Okay Maturin. It's time. Music please!

Maturin nods, wipes the drip from his nose and then starts to play. Breton music.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)
Uh-uh Maturin. I said classical music...

Maturin stops. Nods. And strikes up some classical music. It is tuneless and horrible. Corentin pretends to appreciate it for a few seconds.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)
OK! You know what? Let's forget about classical music!

Maturin breathes a sigh of relief and goes back to the music he loves.

MATHURIN
Are you sure she's coming?... Okay...

CORENTIN
(fakely poetic)
Young fool, you know nothing about women, of course she will come. I can already smell her perfume.

MATHURIN
[glum] Okay.

Maturin doesn't seem convinced.

INT. HOTEL DU PLESSIS-BELLIÈRE - NIGHT

Rudolph, standing up on a pedestal table, plays balalaïka like a god while three friends surround him. It's a song with a furious rhythm rock'n roll before it was even invented, played with the instruments of that time.

Felicie drinks cherry juice, and throws her glass like all the other teens are doing. She smiles at how classy she is being, but then notices a poorly dressed young girl, who looks bizarrely like her, on all fours, picking up the smashed glass.

Felicie's face changes.

Rudolph stops dead, he looks at Felicie intensely which makes her blush, and he starts screaming.

RUDOLPH
Everybody to the Concorde!

The whole crowd screams and makes animal noises.

INT. DISUSED ITALIAN THEATRE - NIGHT

Later. All the candles are burnt down. At the theatre Maturin plays slower and slower music. He yawns. Corentin looks at the entrance to the theatre.

MATHURIN
[With lisp] I don't know much about girls. Frankly they are a mystery to me... But I know that this one's not coming...

Corentin doesn't say a word.

MATHURIN (CONT'D)
Can I have the chicken?

Corentin nods. Sad. Maturin eagerly spears a bit of chicken with his violin bow and starts to DEVOUR it.

Corentin gets up.

CORENTIN
Bon appétit!

MATHURIN
Thank you

He walks towards the exit.

EXT. CONCORDE SQUARE - NIGHT

Rudolph and his teen friends are carrying torchlights. Rudolph lights up some fireworks which go in all directions and explode in the night sky.

RUDOLPH

(screaming)

Ah! Paris, city of lights! (Shaking his torchlight) The light must chase the winter away!



One of the fireworks sets light to a passer-by's coat, another to a carriage. Rudolph's teen friends burst out with laughter and, grabbing Felicie swirl her round and around a straw horse, carried aloft by them. Felicie does not find it funny anymore. She is dizzy and disgusted.

FELICIE

(cynical)

Is this your idea of fun?

RUDOLPH
(in a trance)
No! This is!

Rudolph lights up another firework, screaming. It flies into an apartment window.

EXT. STREET OF RIVOLI - NIGHT

Corentin, head low, wanders through the streets. He sees the fireworks explode in the sky. He is intrigued.

EXT. CONCORDE SQUARE - NIGHT

The fireworks are bursting in the sky, the aristocrats are dancing and waving their torches around. It is a bit out of control. Rudolph is putting his heart and soul into it. Felicie forces a smile.

Suddenly she turns around and sees Corentin watching her. She leaves the group and walks towards him.

FELICIE
I'm sorry.

CORENTIN
Why?

FELICIE
I completely forgot about your invitation.

CORENTIN
Oh that! You're kidding, I totally forgot about it too.

Rudolph arrives and wraps himself around Felicie. Corentin watches, even more sad.

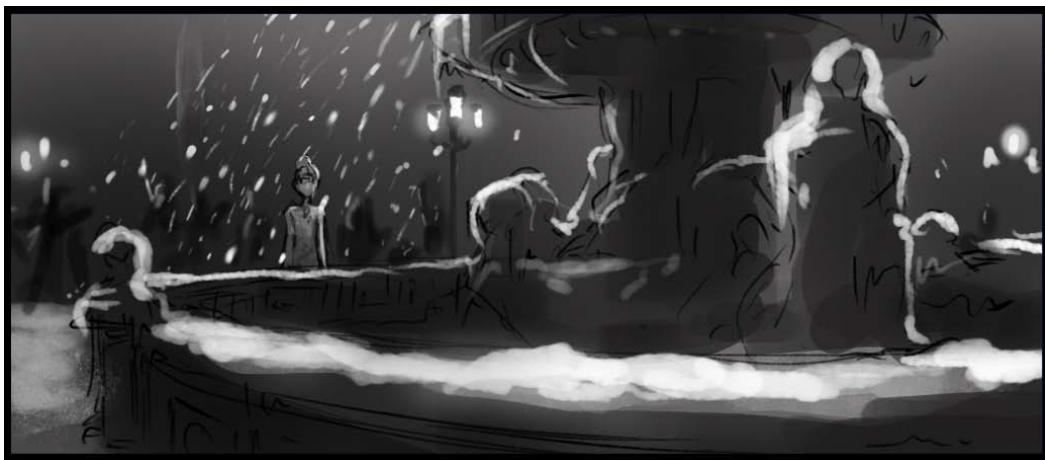
RUDOLPH
Is this hobo bothering you?

FELICIE
No!? He's a friend.

Corentin looks at Felicie and Rudolph.

CORENTIN
You know what? That's not true. I don't know you Miss show-off.

Felicie stares at Corentin. He looks away from her.



RUDOLPH
Let's go! The Arc de Triomphe is awaiting us.

FELICIE
(proud)
Great, let's go.

Felicie and Rudolph walk away.

CORENTIN
I feel sorry for you Felicie.

She stops and turns around.

FELICIE
Mind your own business!

CORENTIN
Just look at yourself. You will never be part of their world... mixing with this... hairy asparagus. You're pathetic.

Felicie looks hurt. Rudolph, cantankerous, comes closer to Corentin.

RUDOLPH
I could knock you out with one flick of my tiny finger... but that would make my finger dirty and smelly...

CORENTIN
So I'm dirty... but at least I don't spend my day in tights...

The two boys square up to each other and start to bump bellies, like wrestlers.

FELICIE
Are you serious?

The two boys go eyeball to eyeball. They circle each other putting up their fists.

RUDOLPH
She is MY muse.

CORENTIN
Yeah! Well she's my what-you-just-said too...with knobs on! Asparagus!

The two of them run into each other without letting go, they look ridiculous. They grab each other and twirl.

FELICIE

STOP!

The two boys stop grappling and look at Felicie.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

You're both idiots!

Felicie looks at them, appalled, and runs away.

The two of them end up noticing at some point that she left, and stop.

RUDOLPH

Ok well, goodbye then.

CORENTIN

Well Goodbye

Rudolph holds out his hand. Corentin smiles and shakes his hand. Without any warning, Rudolph punches him with the other hand. Corentin looks at him, aghast.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

That is so low.

Corentin collapses. Rudolph bursts into laughter and goes to meet his group of friends. Corentin clutches his stomach and watches Felicie run away.

EXT. LE HAUT BUILDING/COURTYARD - NIGHT

Through the window, a shivering Felicie watches Odette sitting at the table.

Odette is looking at the old ballet shoes she gave Felicie. Sad.

Felicie walks away. Too ashamed to go back.

EXT. DISUSED ITALIAN THEATRE - NIGHT

Felicie appears from out of an icy swirl of snow. Alone. Freezing cold. She reaches the entrance of the Italian Theatre and heads inside.

INT. DISUSED ITALIAN THEATRE - NIGHT

Felicie wanders into the interior of the theatre. She discovers the remains of the romantic evening organised by Corentin.

She sits down, sad, and then discovers the music box on the table. It is perfect. She sighs. She winds the music box. The music starts, her tears well up. She closes her eyes and drops her head between her arms on the table.

INT. DISUSED ITALIAN THEATRE - EARLY MORNING

Felicie sleeps in the same position as the night before. A ray of sunshine hits her face. She opens one eye and starts. She is tired, she rubs her eyes. The bells chime... 8 times. She is late. She jumps up, grabs the music box and runs off.

EXT. PARIS STREET - EARLY MORNING (SNOW)

Felicie runs with all her strength, avoiding passers-by.

INT. OPERA/AUDITION ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Camille finishes her audition under the eyes of Merante and Rosita. She is technically perfect. Regine applauds.

MERANTE

Very good.

REGINE LE HAUT

The orphan is late. It is over.

MERANTE

Not yet. She still has two minutes.

EXT. PARIS STREET - EARLY MORNING (SNOW)

Felicie falls flat on her face in the snow, exhausted. She gets back up, determined.

INT. OPERA/AUDITION ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Everybody is waiting.

REGINE LE HAUT

This is becoming ridiculous.

MERANTE

Okay. Well, as Felicie did not show up for the audition, it is Camille who...

FELICIE (O.S.)

I'm sorry...

Felicie bursts into the room. The room is instantly tense, Camille and REGINE LE HAUT look at each other. Felicie gets in position on the stage and adjusts her tutu. She is wearing the sparkly ballet shoes given to her by Rudolph.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

I apologise.

MERANTE

Are you aware that wearing new shoes for an audition is not recommended.

FELICIE

They're all I have.

MERANTE

Good luck then.

The music starts. Felicie strikes a pose, her hand trembling. Felicie starts her dance. At the first leap, she lands badly, stumbles and falls. Everyone holds their breath. Camille and Regine are enjoying this. Felicie stands back up.

FELICIE

May I start again?

MERANTE

Did you train yesterday?

FELICIE

No.

MERANTE

Did you sleep?

FELICIE

No!

CAMILLE

Give her a chance.

REGINE LE HAUT

Have you gone mad?

CAMILLE

She is humiliating herself.

MERANTE

Start again.

Felicie strikes the pose again, the music starts. At the first leap, she stumbles again. Camille is jubilant.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

Camille, you will have the honor of dancing with Rosita.

Merante leaves. Camille and Regine Le Haut embrace each other. Camille takes this chance to look at herself in the mirror.

Rosita approaches Felicie and holds out her hand to help her up.

ROSITA

I would have loved to dance with you.

Felicie looks up at her, aghast. Then a hand pushes her towards the door. It is Regine Le Haut.

REGINE LE HAUT

You are mine!

EXT. OPERA/STREET - MORNING (SNOW)

Felicie exits the Opera, pushed by Regine. Snow is falling and an icy wind is blowing.

Two policemen are waiting near a carriage. She points at Felicie.

REGINE LE HAUT

There is your fugitive. Take her away.

The policemen usher Felicie into the orphanage carriage. The door shuts on her and the carriage pulls away.

Regine, victorious, watches the carriage leave.

EXT. STREET - MORNING (SNOW)

Felicie is in the carriage that is taking her to the orphanage. Devastated, she looks through the bars. She passes by the Le Haut building. On the sidewalk in front of the building, Odette is sweeping snow. A tear runs down Felicie's cheeks.

The carriage drives away.

EXT. ORPHANAGE/STREET - DAY (SNOW)

The carriage arrives in front of the looming horrible orphanage building again. She steps out and a dirty, greasy worker takes her by the shoulder, walking her towards the door.

INT. ORPHANAGE/HALLWAY - DAY

A hand hands Felicie a sinister grey uniform.

INT. ORPHANAGE/DINING ROOM - DAY

Felicie looks at a bowl of food. Bugs swim in the horrible sloppy meal.

INT. ORPHANAGE/DORM - NIGHT

Felicie scratches itchy clothing in an overcrowded, noisy Dorm.

EXT. ORPHANAGE/COURTYARD - DAY (SNOW)

In the snowy courtyard, Felicie walks, frozen cold, head low. She gets bumped into by kids who walk by her but don't even notice her.

Further away, she notices the cute girl [sleepy head] from before, getting a rough ride from a big kid.

FELICIE

Let her go.

The big kid turns around.

BIG KID

Beat it!

FELICIE

When 'the Panther' gets here he will teach you some manners.

The big kid lets go of the cute girl and comes closer to Felicie, looking terrifying. He grabs her by the collar and lifts her up with one arm. Her feet aren't touching the ground anymore.

BIG KID

Who is this 'Panther'?

FELICIE

(staring defiantly back)

He's a destruction machine. In Paris, he's the boss. And it so happens that I'm his protégée.

The big kid stares at her, puts her down and squares up. The little boy looks at her apologetically.

Felicie doesn't get flustered. Instead she raises her arms into a ballet pose and starts to dance. The bully is mesmerised... then as fast as lightning she uses a ballet kick to kick him between the legs. The big kid collapses.

FELICIE (CONT'D)
(in the big kid's ear)
«The panther» is watching you.

THE CUTE GIRL/SLEEPY HEAD
What was that?

Felicie drops her ballet grace.

FELICIE
That was nothing.

THE CUTE GIRL/SLEEPY HEAD
Thank you.

Felicie smiles at her and starts walking again sadly through the courtyard.

INT. DORMITORY - NIGHT

Felicie lays on her hard bed in the dorm. She is caressing the music box. Snores and whimpers fill the air. She looks out of the window at the moon. All alone again.

INT. ORPHANAGE/HALLWAY - DAY

Two days later. Felicie is led down the stairs by the dirty, greasy worker.

DIRTY GREASY WORKER
Wait here.

FELICIE
What for?

DIRTY GREASY WORKER
Someone has adopted you.

Felicie looks shocked as a horrible mangled shadow appears on the wall. Felicie grimaces as she expects the worst...

But the shadow softens as it enters the hallway. It is Odette!

ODETTE
Felicie!

Felicie flings herself at Odette and cuddles her tighter than tight.

FELICIE

I'm-so-sorry-I-was-so-thoughtless-you gave-me-
everything-and-I-did-not-know...-I'll-never-do-that-ever-
again... I missed you.

Beat. Odette hugs her back. Tight.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

I... I love you.

Odette looks overwhelmed, but softer.

ODETTE

Hum. That. Me. That... me... also.

EXT. ORPHANAGE/STREET - DAY

Odette and Felicie leave the building, snuggled up against each other.

ODETTE

There's someone else who wants to see you. He has
important things to tell you.

Felicie, intrigued, catches Odette who puts on a mysterious smile.

INT. OPERA/HALLWAY & MAIN STAIRCASE - DAY

An astonished Felicie is facing Merante. Beside him is the Director of Opera.

MERANTE

What is the most important thing in the world for you?

FELICIE

Dancing.

DIRECTOR OF OPERA

Dancing has a price.

FELICIE

I'm ready to make all the sacrifices I need to make. I've
been foolish... I have made mistakes. Big mistakes. Now
I want to learn. To improve.

Merante and the Director of opera nod.

MERANTE

Very well. The situation has changed. You are not a
fugitive orphan anymore but an adopted child. Odette

has asked me to take you back. And I can't say no to her.

Merante looks at the Director of Opera.

DIRECTOR OF OPERA

... Yes, er... and I can't say no to my talented director of ballet...

Felicie smiles.

DIRECTOR OF OPERA (CONT'D)

But you start with the Quadrilles... The beginners class.

Felicie nods. The Director of opera walks away. Felicie turns to Merante.

FELICIE

The next time I dance for you I want it to be because I've earned it.

Merante nods. Felicie smiles and curtseys.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

By the way just so you know... Odette goes red every time your name is mentioned.

Merante coughs.

MERANTE

OK, erm, let's go!

Merante and Felicie walk up the steps of the Opera where the DOD awaits them.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

You know, Odette was the best dancer of her generation. She had passion and perfection. Then there was a fire on stage... Her dress... she ran to escape... she fell... in one night she was robbed of the chance to be a great dancer and... a mother.

Felicie has tears in her eyes.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

I think that you have started to heal both those things. She calls you Bambolina. 'Little Daughter'...

They reach the DOD.

DOD

It is forbidden to cry in the hallways of the Opera.

FELICIE

20 sous?

They smile.

INT. OPERA/CORRIDOR 2/STAIRS/CORRIDOR 3 - DAY

The Director of Discipline gives Felicie the tour of the building as in the first time she arrived.

At the other end of the corridor, Camille, who is about to enter the rehearsal room, spots Felicie. She looks shocked at herself in the mirror....

CAMILLE

Arghhhhh! Her! Who let that little rat back in here?

She turns to see Merante towering over her.

MERANTE

Miss Le Haut. I suggest you channel that anger into impressing me in today's rehearsal.

Camille nods. But then watches angrily as Felicie is led towards a classroom.

INT. OPERA/CLASSROOM - DAY

Felicie is led into her new classroom. She stands there smiling.

FELICIE

Hi everyone. I'm Felicie.

The class is full of cute-eyed 8-9 year old pupils. They all look at Felicie and smile in awe.

CLASS OF KIDS

Ooooooooooooooh!!!

They part to let her join them. She grins. Noiret sees Felicie, sighs and strikes up...

INT. OPERA/CLASSROOM - DAY

Felicie dances with the beginners. As the class finishes the doors burst open and Marie-Clementine, Nora and Dora come in. Her and Felicie fall into their arms.

MARIE-CLEMENTINE

Welcome home. I was watching you through the window.

NORA

Were you abducted by moon people?

The friends link arms and leave the class.

MARIE-CLEMENTINE

It's so good to have you back. The place was so dull without you.

DORA

And I'm going to marry an aristocrat...

NORA

Once I ate my ballet shoes.

FELICIE

I'm so...proud of you!

RUDOLPH (O.S.)

Here is my favourite rebel...
Hello ladies... Dora... MC... Hey, how you doing

They turn around. Rudolph walks towards them like a feline. He kisses Felicie's hand and then looks up and winks at Nora. She now carries on winking at everyone.

MARIE-CLEMENTINE

We'll leave you two.

FELICIE

No, no, stay.

RUDOLPH

I missed you, you know.

FELICIE

I thought about you a lot last night.

RUDOLPH

Of course you did.

FELICIE

Yes, I had asparagus for dinner...

Marie-Clementine and Dora stifle laughs.

RUDOLPH

Ok, good, I got it.

Rudolph turns around.

FELICIE

Come on Rudi, don't take it that way...friends?

Rudi nods. Felicie grins and offers her hand to him. He grins too and leans to kiss her hand. Then he looks up and winks at NORA.

RUDOLPH

Have...er you seen the roof of the opera?

She winks and clicks back. He looks at her. She winks and clicks. Then again, then again....she can't stop.

RUDOLPH (CONT'D)

Okay, you can stop that now.

Nora goes on as he leads her off.

RUDOLPH (CONT'D)

Stop, seriously...

The clicking carries on [see terrified Rudolph in the out-takes.]

EXT. STREET TO EIFFEL'S STUDIO - EVENING

Felicie arrives at Eiffel's studio.

INT. EIFFEL'S STUDIO - EVENING

Felicie enters the atelier. Mathurin is there. But not Corentin.

MATHURIN

[With lisp] He's not here. He told me to say that to you if you turned up, but it's great because I don't have to lie, because he really isn't here.

Under the table, a squashed Corentin is listening to Mathurin, waffling...

MATHURIN (CONT'D)

Yep, he is SOOOOO not here.

Corentin takes a ruler and snaps it onto Mathurin's leg.

MATHURIN (CONT'D)

Owwwww... I let him know you dropped by.

Felicie thinks and writes on a piece of paper on the desk. 'SORRY Skunk' Felicie xxx'. She puts the notes on his workbench.

INT. OPERA/AUDITION ROOM - MORNING

Merante rehearses La Korrigane with Camille. She is technically perfect, but the passion is not there. Merante stops her.

MERANTE

Again.

Camille dances again. Merante claps to stop her.

MERANTE (CONT'D)

No! As cold as lard! You perform tonight. Find some anger or some pain or some love... but find something!

Camille storms out of the class, watching her reflection as she does.

INT. EIFFEL'S STUDIO - DAY

Corentin sits at a work bench he has the badly broken model he smashed earlier. He is trying to glue it together again. Felicie's note is visible.

As he works an adult hand comes into shot and looks at the model.

CORENTIN

My new idea sir: I call it the Tower of PANTHER...

Corentin turns. It's his boss [Gustave Eiffel.] He nods at the model...

GUSTAVE EIFFEL

Interesting. I don't like the name.

CORENTIN

Anything you say... Mister Eiffel

INT. OPERA/AUDITORIUM STAGE - DAY

Felicie stands in the middle of the stage looking at the auditorium. It is set for La Korrigane. Felicie looks at the Breton architecture and symbols and gets homesick.

Camille steps into the light behind her.

CAMILLE

Little Rat! I know what you are doing...

Camille walks up to her and pushes her backwards towards the orchestra pit.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

Tomorrow these seats will be full. Paris will be looking at me. Adoring me!

She pushes Felicie again towards the orchestra pit. Felicie shrugs her off.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

But you try to poison Merante. You think you are better... Is that it?

She pushes again. On the edge of the pit Felicie looks down and becomes angry. She pushes back hard.

FELICIE

Only one way to find out bourgeoisie. Right here. Right now.

Felicie walks away and strikes a pose.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

Show me what you've got!

Camille snorts. The dance-off is on.

A dance duel. Felicie and Camille take it in turns to perform their moves. Each trying to out-do the other. Felicie dances with passion and feeling and expression.

Felicie wins by doing a sequence of movements in the set that are totally at one: it is as if she is at home.

She finishes in slow motion with THE MOVE that Rosita performed on stage the first time she saw her that night on the Opera stage.

Camille cannot believe it and KNOWS she is beaten. But Camille shrugs.

CAMILLE

Big deal! It's too late! I danced. I won...

Merante steps forwards from the stalls, applauding. Both girls are shocked.

MERANTE

Impressive ladies. But let me ask you a little question... why do you dance?

Camille thinks and looks at herself in the reflections in the set windows.

CAMILLE

Because I want to be a star.

Merante looks at Felicie awaiting her response.

FELICIE

Because... I can't express myself any other way.

Merante nods.

MERANTE

Felicie, tonight YOU dance La Korrigane.

CAMILLE

What?

Felicie looks overjoyed. Camille looks incensed by this.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

The little rat! You're gonna pay for this.

Merante nods. Beat. Camille screams and runs from the stage in tears.

INT. ODETTE'S LODGE - DAY

Felicie and Odette swing round celebrating. Odette remembers she is being too gushy and puts on her normal hard face again.

FELICIE

Oh thank you! I'm dancing my first ballet. It's all because of you.

Felicie begins to put on her dance outfit for La Korrigane. Odette grunts.

ODETTE

Lucky you met me!

Felicie grins. She holds out Odette's ballet shoes.

FELICIE

Can I wear these? I want you to be there with me. I want you and Corentin....

Felicie stops in her tracks.

ODETTE

Then go and get him.

Felicie bites her lip.

FELICIE

I can't. There's no time and... I don't know what to say.

ODETTE

It's Corentin and you. Words are not the problem.

Felicie nods and puts her coat on over her ballet costume.

EXT. STREET TO ODETTE'S LODGE - EVENING (SNOW)

Felicie exits the building. Beat. Regine has seen her and follows. Camille walks behind her mother.

INT. EIFFEL'S STUDIO - EVENING

Felicie walks up to Corentin's bench. He is not there.

On one wall she sees pinned up Marie-Clementine's sketch on which she wrote sorry: over the outline Marie-Clementine drew. Next to it is a half-built model of the Eiffel tower. She wrinkles her nose.

Felicie turns to leave and there in the doorway is Corentin.

They look at each other. Chemistry. A serious moment.

FELICIE

I've come... I've come to...

CORENTIN

Tell me you hate me again?

FELICIE

To say... I am sorry. You were right. I was wrong. I've been unkind and I've been stupid...

CORENTIN

And rude.

FELICIE

And rude.

CORENTIN

And selfish....

FELICIE

And selfish

CORENTIN

And uncaring... and mean... Did I say rude?

FELICIE

All that. [Genuine] I've been all those things.

Felicie nods.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

I'm dancing tonight at the opera. It will be nothing if you're not there.

Corentin grins. Felicie grins.

CORENTIN

I like you Felicie. You make me laugh and cry at the same time... and I like your wrists.... and...

Suddenly there is a BANG. Corentin's face goes all gooey and his eyes cross. Beat.

FELICIE

You are a weirdo.

But then Corentin drops to the ground. He is unconscious. There is Regine Le Haut with a huge iron wrench.

And standing behind her... Camille.

Felicie moves towards Corentin but Regine steps over Corentin and towards Felicie.

REGINE LE HAUT

Tut. Tut. Tut. You cannot help him.

Felicie steps back. Regine and Camille walk towards Felice, who backs towards the double doors.

REGINE LE HAUT (CONT'D)

First you deceive my daughter. Then you take her identity. Now you try and take OUR honour and our future. And for that...

Regine smashes the mallet down on a plaster sculpture. Smashing it to smithereens. Both Felicie and Camille wince.

FELICIE

Stop!

Regine shakes her head and swings the mallet. Felicie backs off towards the doors to the next studio. Regine and Camille approach.

REGINE LE HAUT
Tonight my daughter will dance!

Felicie looks at Camille.

FELICIE
Camille. Come on. I didn't know Merante was
watching... I'm not against you...

REGINE LE HAUT
It is too late for these pathetic excuses...

Regine swings the wrench at her and Felicie ducks. Camille looks at her mother...

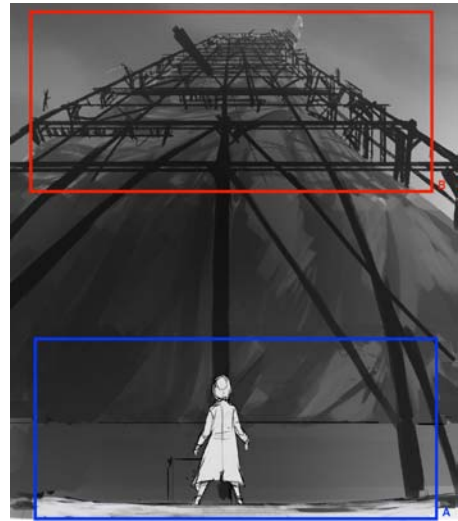
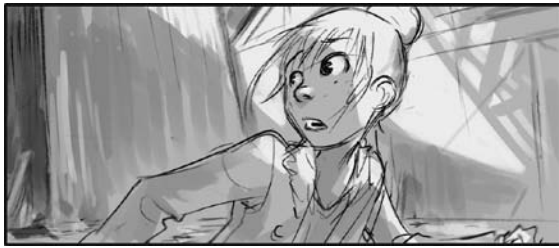
CAMILLE
Mum...

But Regine is not listening.

INT. WAREHOUSE/STATUE OF LIBERTY - EVENING

Felicie bursts through the door from Eiffel's studio into a huge warehouse. She GAPES. Her awe is our awe. The secret thing that is being constructed is THE STATUE OF LIBERTY. Huge sections of the Statue are surrounded by scaffolding.





The wrench hitting the wall above her brings her back to her senses.

CAMILLE

Mum... we have scared her... come on...

But Regine has fire in her eyes. Felicie backs away from Regine and down some stairs. Regine, seeing her getting away, swings on a pulley down to be close to her.

FELICIE

I'm sorry for it all...

Camille smiles a weak smile.

But Regine swings the wrench into a scaffolding pipe. Felicie ducks. The pipe is dented.

Felicie steps onto a plank lift and starts to pulley herself up the scaffolding. Regine Le Haut steps onto a pulley lift next to her and starts to follow. Camille stands at the bottom looking worried.

CAMILLE

Stop!

At the top Regine and Felicie face one another along a series of planks.

REGINE LE HAUT

[To Camille] I don't think so... remember who you are!
Le Haut's always win!



Felicie climbs higher. The drop is enormous. At the top she jumps between a series of planks, like she did at Les Halles, only this time Regine Le Haut follows slowly but surely after her.

Felicie scrambles up the crown and along one of the points. She balances right on the end.

At this point there is a crash and a groggy Corentin enters from the atelier, staggering, as if he is drunk.

CORENTIN
Feilishi... I'll phave you...

He looks up at Felicie on the point of the crown.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)
[seeing double] Both of you...

ON the crown Felicie looks at Regine. Regine sees Felicie teeter and smiles.

REGINE LE HAUT
This is the only crown you will touch today. Victim of a terrible accident on the night of your debut.

Regine kicks a plank from the scaffolding. It tumbles to the ground and splinters.

CAMILLE
Mum. No!

Regine looks down at Camille

REGINE LE HAUT
[To Camille] Where is your back bone? [To Felicie] You will have something to share with Odette... both of you USED to be dancers.

Felicie wobbles and braces herself. Regine smiles wickedly and lunges at her...

Felicie holds her arms aloft and, concentrating, performs a somersault leap, just as she has done at the girders in Les Halles.

She jumps over Regine and lands with perfect balance on another point.

Regine is still lunging, but now only at thin air...

She falls, flailing her arms.

Her dress catches on a plank of the scaffolding and she dangles there like a puppet.

Felicie sees she has trapped her foe and grabs a rope.

She slides down the rope to the ground....

...Where she lands on a still groggy Corentin. He thinks he has saved her.

He grins. Winks.

CORENTIN

[Groggy voice] Can we both agree this is definitely a rescue!

Felicie pushes him off. Then sees the big bump on his head. She reaches out and presses it.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

Owwwwwww!!!

Camille runs towards her mother.

REGINE LE HAUT

Do something.

But as she speaks her dress rips and she falls down and... into a huge vat of sticky tar below. Corentin and Felicie watch as a sticky and heavy Regine Le Haut emerges, and a distraught Camille rush to aid her..

The sticky black Regine shouts at them as she SLOPS out of the vat.

REGINE LE HAUT (CONT'D)

We still win rat!... You won't make it in time to dance.

Felicie looks anxiously around her. Regine is right.

CAMILLE

Go! Hurry! You'll be late! I'll take care of my mum.

Felicie touches her arm.

FELICIE

Thank you.

CAMILLE

Don't touch me I still hate you.

FELICIE

[To Corentin] I need to get to the opera!

Corentin winks.

CORENTIN

Then all you have to do is ask the 'Panther' to invent something...

EXT. PARIS STREET 2 - NIGHT (SNOW)

The frozen roads of Paris. Beat.

SFX: WHOOOOOOOOOOOOOP!

Corentin and Felicie SNOWBOARD into shot. Corentin has made a crude snowboard from planks and a dust-sheet sail. Felicie has her eyes closed.

CORENTIN

One day everyone will travel like this!

Felicie opens her eye a chink. She likes it! Corentin can steer it in and out of traffic.[Homage to the prow of the ship scene in Titanic as they surf through Paris]

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

I'm going to call it... Sheety-planky board.

Felicie sighs, but enjoys the ride.

INT. OPERA/AUDITORIUM STAGE/BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

La Korrigane has started, dancers fill the stage and the wings. Merante is pacing in the wings. He turns to Odette.

MERANTE

Where is she?

EXT. OPERA/STREET - NIGHT (SNOW)

Felicie and Corentin Snowboard towards the opera building. Fast.

FELICIE

Brake!!!!!!

CORENTIN

Great idea! Version 2 will have a brake!

Corentin jumps up, grabs a lamppost rial and swings off. Felicie and the snowboard SMASH into a snow drift. She emerges DRENCHED and icy.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

You can say thank you later!

Felicie grins and runs towards the opera. Corentin grins and slowly pimp rolls into the building.

INT. OPERA/AUDITORIUM BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

The orchestra begins to play the La Korrigane tune that Felice must dance.

ODETTE

She'll be here.

Merante paces. Then they hear it. Bickering. Coming nearer.

FELICIE

You always go too far!

CORENTIN

Do not.

FELICIE

Do!

Felicie and Corentin arrive. Felicie's ballet costume is covered in dirt. Her hair is messy.

FELICIE (CONT'D)

I'm ready!

MERANTE

Then dance. From here.

He points to her heart. She nods.

Felicie stands next to the wings. She looks tense and scared. Can she do this? Corentin is suddenly at her side. He takes her hand.

CORENTIN

If it all goes wrong I have a plan!

INT. OPERA/AUDITORIUM STAGE - NIGHT

Felicie enters the stage and joins Rosita Mauri, the 'Etoile'. Rosita smiles down at her.

ROSITA

Let's set Paris on fire...

Felicie nods. The two of them dance with their soul. With love and passion. Felicie's contribution is a mixture of her Breton moves she did with her Mum and dad, moves she learnt from Odette, Corentin and Merante.

The music reaches its beautiful climax with Felicie and Rosita in total harmony.

INT. OPERA/AUDITORIUM STAGE/BALCONY - NIGHT

In a box at the balcony, Albert and the Director of Opera watch the dance.

Suddenly the door of the box slams open and Regine Le Haut appears, out of breath, followed by Camille. She is awfully dirty, her dress is torn, her hair is a mess, she has a bruised face and her arm is in a hastily constructed splint made from bits of wood. Regine watches with horror as Felicie and Rosita come to an amazing end.

Camille sees her dancing and is enraptured.

Suddenly, everyone is on their feet and throwing roses.

Felicie modestly bows alongside the Etoile.

Albert and the Director of Opera applaud.

Camille comes next to Albert. She starts to clap with her father.

REGINE LE HAUT
Stop clapping you cretins!

Albert turns and looks at her.

ALBERT
No! She was wonderful.

REGINE LE HAUT
Are you disobeying me?

ALBERT
From now on. YES!!!!

Regine looks shocked. She fumes and raises her good hand, ready to strike Albert. But another hand grabs her arm : it is the janitor who pulls her out of the box.

JANITOR
Caught you, you dirty stinky beggar!

Regine disappears, screaming and shouting at the janitor.

Camille applauds.... reluctantly

CAMILLE
She's good, but I still hate her.

Albert looks at Camille. He winks at her. She winks back at him. Albert and Camille both applaud, a new alliance.

INT. OPERA/AUDITORIUM STAGE/BACKSTAGE - NIGHT



In the wings Merante is overjoyed by the success and without thinking kisses Odette on the lips Beat. She looks back at him. Then she kisses him passionately back. [Shocking herself].

The DOD appears from behind a curtain.

DOD

Kissing on opera premises...20 sous!

Merante coolly takes a coin and flicks it at the DOD and kisses Odette again.

Felicie leaves the stage and sees Odette and Merante smiling at one another. Corentin steps towards her [unwittingly putting his foot in a stage rope loop].

FELICIE

Okay. This is the first and only time you are ever going to hear me say these words... For saving my life...

CORENTIN

Four times...

FELICIE

... for the music box... for being my best friend...

CORENTIN

Yes...

FELICIE

Thank you. I like you.

CORENTIN

You say 'like'... but I know women. I know it is more.

Beat. She leans towards him to kiss him. Corentin leans in for the kiss. But then a piece of the stage set comes down. Corentin has his foot caught in the rope loop and suddenly FLIES upwards to the top of the stage.

He dangles there.

CORENTIN (CONT'D)

Technically you still owe me a kiss!!!! Hit it Matty!

Mathurin comes out of the wings, playing the Breton violin.

Everyone laughs.

END OF THE MOVIE

