

**SHOWGIRLS**

by

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1 EXT. A FREEWAY - MORNING

1

Her name is NOMI MALONE. She looks from a distance like a kid. She stands along the Interstate, outlined in the shadows of the setting sun. She's got a big American Tourister in front of her with a sign on it that says: "Vegas". The suitcase looks like it's been dropped from a plane or something. She's wearing a baseball cap, a worn black leather jacket, torn jeans, and time-kissed cowboy boots. She's got her thumb out.

A sign near her says: "Salt Lake City -- 10; Las Vegas -- 342."

Cars and trucks roar by her and then a beaten-up, hard top Jeep pulls to a stop. We hear Garth Brooks BLASTING. The door swings open. She grabs her suitcase, goes up to it, looks the guy over warily. JEFF is in his mid-20's. He has the lanky callowness of the urban cowboy.

JEFF

Hop in, pard.

NOMI (hesitant)

Where you goin'?

JEFF (grins)

Vegas.

She looks at him warily.

JEFF (laughs)

Come on, this here's your lucky day.

She hesitates, then as he opens the back door, she lifts the big suitcase into the back seat. A beat, a final hesitation, and she gets into the front seat.

The Jeep roars onto the freeway.

2 INT. THE JEEP - DAY

2

The Garth Brooks tape is still BLARING. Jeff looks over at her, pressed against the door, and grins.

JEFF

You can sit a little closer if you want.

And instantly she pops a switchblade open and holds it. Jeff looks at the blade, looks at her.

JEFF

It was a bad idea!

NOMI

Chill, okay?

She holds the open switchblade casually.

JEFF  
I'm chilled.

A beat, as he drives.

JEFF (grins)  
I sure am glad you're gonna be such good company.

She looks at him a beat and, still holding the open switchblade, shuts Garth Brooks off and puts the radio on to the heavy metal.

NOMI  
I don't like Garth Brooks!

JEFF (after a beat)  
Me neither! I don't know anybody that likes Garth Brooks.

They sit there saying nothing. He drives. She stares ahead, the blade in her hand.

JEFF (looks at the knife)  
You gonna keep that thing open all the way to Vegas?

She says nothing, stares ahead. She takes her baseball cap off. Her hair falls down her back. He looks at her. She looks beautiful.

JEFF  
You got a name?

She says nothing, stares ahead, listening to the music, lost in it.

JEFF  
Look. I'll pull on over and you can get out, okay? I been drivin' all the way from Kansas. I'm tired and I ain't in the mood to get myself pig-stuck for doin' somebody a favor.

She says nothing, stares ahead.

JEFF  
Okay? I'll pull on over.

He starts to pull over. Without looking at him, she snaps the switchblade shut, but keeps it in her hand.

A beat, as he drives.

JEFF  
So -- you got a name? I'm Jeff.

NOMI  
Nomi.

She pronounces it "Noe-mi." She doesn't even look at him.

JEFF (grins)  
What kinda name's that?

NOMI  
(without looking at him)  
My mom was Italian.

JEFF (grins)  
You one of those Mafia girls? That why  
you got your blade?

She looks at him evenly.

JEFF (grins)  
What you goin' to Vegas for? You gonna  
win?

She looks away from him again.

NOMI (after a beat)  
I'm gonna dance.

JEFF (grins)  
You gonna be one of them real private  
escort dancers?

She looks at him hard, holding the switchblade.

JEFF (after a beat)  
Okay. Okay. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

3 INT. THE JEEP - TWILIGHT/NIGHT

3

He drives; she stares straight ahead. Far ahead, shimmering in the setting sun, we see the Vegas skyline, the desert high-rises, surrounded by nothing.

JEFF  
There she is.

He smiles; her face is deadpan, she stares straight ahead.

NOMI  
You been here before?

JEFF  
Sure. I got an uncle. He's one of the  
hosts at The Riviera. I ain't never  
won, though.

NOMI (quietly)  
I'm gonna win.

JEFF  
You gamble?

NOMI

No.

JEFF (smiles)

You gotta gamble if you're gonna win.

She looks at him.

JEFF

You can use some of that Mafia money you got in that suitcase.

She looks away.

NOMI

Asshole!

JEFF (laughs)

Hell, I can't deny that.

4 EXT. PARKING LOT - RIVIERA - NIGHT

4

They are getting out of the car.

JEFF

I can talk to my uncle, see if he can help you get a job.

She is taking her suitcase out of the car. She stops, looks at him suspiciously.

JEFF (smiles)

Ain't anybody ever been nice to you?

She looks at him. A beat, and she decides to leave the suitcase in the car.

5 INT. THE RIVIERA HOTEL - NIGHT

5

They are in the casino. There are hundreds of people even at this hour. There are slot machines everywhere -- the pulsating HUM and ever-present JINGLE of machine and money that is Vegas. She stares wide-eyed at this glittering, swirling world.

JEFF (grins)

Wanna play a slot machine?

She shrugs. He grins, takes a ten dollar bill out of his wallet.

JEFF

Here. You win, we split it up. No holdin' out on me, either.

A beat; and she takes the ten.

JEFF  
I'm gonna go see my uncle. I'll meet  
you right back here.

He winks, grins, and heads away. She stares at this scene a  
beat, then goes up to a slot machine, stares at it.

A CHANGE GIRL  
Can I give you some change?

NOMI (after a beat)  
Sure.

6 INT. THE CASINO - LATER

6

She is at a slot machine with a stack of quarters. She keeps  
plunking them in -- losing, losing, losing. And then she plunks  
a quarter in and coins cascade out of the machine. She stares  
at this cascading money, backs a little away.

NOMI  
(quietly to herself)  
Holy... shit.

A beat, and then she laughs to herself. It is a little girlish  
laugh. She looks around excitedly for Jeff. He isn't there.

ANOTHER CHANGE GIRL  
Look at you!

She laughs with Nomi a little.

THE CHANGE GIRL  
You want to try silver dollars?

NOMI (after a beat)  
Sure.

7 INT. THE CASINO - LATER

7

She is plunking silver dollars in -- one after the other --  
losing, losing. She's down to her last one. She hesitates.  
She watches... and loses. She stands there a long beat,  
staring.

A MAN BEHIND HER  
You lose all your money, honey?

She nods, looks like she's in a daze. Then she turns and looks  
at the Man. Fat, bejeweled, prototypical Vegas sleazebag.

THE MAN (smiles)  
You wanna make some more, it won't take  
us longer than fifteen minutes.

She looks at him a beat, then turns and starts quickly away.

THE MAN (after her  
Sooner or later, you're gonna sell it.

He grins.

She goes to the lobby, looks around for Jeff. He isn't there.

A long beat, as she thinks of something, and then she hurries outside.

8 EXT. THE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

8

She walks out, looks around. Jeff's car isn't there. She stands there a long beat.

NOMI

Shit.

She says it quietly.

NOMI

Shit. You fuck! You fuckin' asshole!

She says it louder and louder. She goes to a Toyota nearby. It is empty. She stands pressed against it for a long beat and then she starts to smash at the windows with her fists, more and more out of control.

A VOICE BEHIND HER

What are you doing? That's my car!

She keeps flailing away at the windows. MOLLY ABRAMS stands behind her. She is 25, good-looking in a dark, slightly overweight way. She wears a simple, but nice dress.

MOLLY (yelling)

I said that's my car.

NOMI (turns on her)

I want my fucking suitcase!

She keeps flailing at the windows --

MOLLY

Stop it --!

She tries to grab Nomi's arm -- Nomi swings at her wildly, misses.

MOLLY

Jesus --

And then Nomi turns from Molly and starts to throw up.

MOLLY (quietly)

Oh my God. What's wrong? What --

As she tries to go closer to Nomi, Nomi starts to run across the parking lot and onto the Strip, zigzagging between cars -- it is a bolt, a fawn running wildly, crazily away.

Molly watches her, then goes into her car, starts it.

9 INT. THE TOYOTA - STRIP - NIGHT

9

Molly moves onto the Strip. As she follows the traffic she suddenly notices Nomi again. She is sitting at the curb, bent forward, miserable. Molly passes her. And then, in an instinctive reaction, she stops - gets out.

As she approaches, Nomi sees her. She gets up, but Molly blocks her way.

MOLLY

Listen --

Nomi pushes her away and without paying attention jumps on the road, to cross. A car is going to hit her, but at the last moment Molly pulls her back. She falls into Molly's arms. She gasps for air, shakes. And starts crying.

10 INT. A COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

10

It is near the Strip in Vegas -- lots of old people in for a cheap meal, a guy in a clown outfit, the flash of pinkie rings.

Molly puts a tray with soft drinks and fries on the table and sits opposite Nomi. Molly looks at her. Nomi doesn't say anything.

MOLLY

What was in your suitcase?

NOMI (after a beat)

Nothin'. Just my stuff. Everything I had.

(grabbing a drink)

Fuck, I just got here!

MOLLY (after a beat)

Welcome to Vegas.

Nomi looks up at Molly.

MOLLY

You know anybody here?

Nomi shakes her head.

MOLLY

Can you call your family?

NOMI (after a beat)

I don't have no family.

She looks down at the table again.

MOLLY  
How old are you?

NOMI  
Twenty-two.

Molly doesn't buy it, stares at her. Nomi looks up at her a beat, then down again.

NOMI  
Nineteen.  
(a beat)  
Almost.

MOLLY  
Where you from?

NOMI  
Back east.

She keeps her eyes down on the table.

MOLLY  
Where back east?

Nomi looks up, looks directly at her.

NOMI  
Different places.

They look at each other a long beat

MOLLY  
You can stay with me if you need a place  
to crash -- it isn't much... 'til you  
get a job.

NOMI (after a long beat)  
Are you hitting on me?

MOLLY (smiles)  
No.

They look at each other.

MOLLY  
You're not a hooker, are you?

NOMI (smiles)  
No.

They look at each other.

SIX WEEKS LATER

11 EXT. MOLLY'S TRAILER - DAY

11

The trailer is small and old, one among a hundred, as crummy as hers. In the background we see Vegas. Molly, in a bathrobe, is taking some clothes from a clothesline - finishes, she heads into the trailer.

12 INT. MOLLY'S TRAILER - DAY

12

It is small but very neat. We see several posters of Andrew Carver on the walls. He is a Michael Bolton-type power balladeer, in his mid 30's, good-looking. We hear an Andrew Carver SONG playing.

Molly enters. She takes off her bathrobe and puts on the dress she took from outside.

Nomi is doing her fingernails -- she has long fingernails and is doing an intricate, multi-colored design on them. She wears jeans and a top, doesn't have any make-up on.

She holds her nails out to Molly, smiles.

NOMI

Check it out.

Molly looks.

MOLLY (smiles)

They're great.

NOMI

(smiles, very pleased)

They're neat, aren't they?

MOLLY (laughs)

They're neat.

(a beat)

You want to come with me? We've got a new lead. She's good.

NOMI

I've got to go to work.

She puts the TV ON -- it's MTV.

MOLLY

Jerk. You don't have to go to work for three hours. What are you gonna do -- watch TV and eat chips?

NOMI (smiles)

Yeah. Where are the chips? You ate 'em, didn't you?

MOLLY (laughs)  
I did not.

NOMI (smiles)  
Yes you did.

MOLLY (smiles)  
Come on, you can show your nails off.  
They'll all be so jealous.

NOMI  
(looks at nails, smiles)  
You think?

MOLLY (smiles)  
I think.

NOMI (after a beat)  
What am I gonna wear?

MOLLY  
I don't know. Wear that dress I made  
last week.

NOMI (excited)  
The hot one. Can I?

MOLLY  
Yeah.

NOMI (excited)  
I'm gonna put my hair up.

MOLLY  
Nomi -- we don't have time to put  
your hair up.

NOMI  
I'll hurry. I promise, I promise,  
promise.

MOLLY (hard)  
Hurry!

She smiles, rolls her eyes.

13 INT. DRESSING ROOM AREA "GODDESS" - THE STARDUST - NIGHT 13

The backstage, dressing room area of this big hotel show is  
actually downstairs -- underneath the stage.

In the final hour before the show goes on, there is a frenetic  
high energy here. "Goddess" itself is a high-energy, loud, 'hip  
Vegas' show, as opposed to the musical cavalcades of the past.  
If it's a street-dancing show, it is, of course, still Vegas --  
glitzy and bigger-than-life.

Molly Abrams is the show's costume person. She is doing last minute adjustments now, as she does every night. She has a needle and thread in hand often and hurries about, fixing the dancers costumes. "Goddess" is a big show; it has 22 dancers, so there is a lot for Molly to do.

Nomi, her hair up, wearing a very sexy slip of a dress, wearing make-up, watches Molly as she goes about her job. Nomi looks drop-dead gorgeous, but seems bedazzled by the whole scene.

There is a lot of nakedness in the room, very casual, very professional, as dancers, both women and men, are getting themselves ready with make-up and costuming.

Nomi watches as Molly sews part of a costume that JULIE, a dancer in her late 20's, is already wearing.

JULIE

I don't know what happened, it just ripped.

MOLLY

It's okay, it's almost done.

INTERCOM VOICE

Last call. Two minutes.

From down the long dressing room, another dancer, ANNIE, yells.

ANNIE

Molly, where are you? They're gonna see a smiling beaver if we don't fix this.

MOLLY (yelling to her)

Be right there, Annie.

JULIE (quietly, to Molly)

She wants to smile her beaver. I bet she tore that string herself.

MOLLY (laughs)

You're terrible, Julie.

She finishes the costume. The girls start leaving for the adjacent corridor. NICKY, another dancer, passes.

NICKY (to Julie)

What is that smell?

JULIE

It's that damn monkey act. He feeds 'em garlic.

NICKY

Oh, God.

Annie now passes too, on her way out. She has her finger sticking out of the hole - it looks like a little prick.

ANNIE (to Molly)  
You want me to go onstage like this?

MOLLY  
I'll be there. I'll fix it.

JULIE (to Molly)  
Who'd want to see her beaver, anyway?

A gay male dancer, DARYL, comes by them.

DARYL  
I certainly wouldn't.

He keeps going. Nomi, watching all this, smiles. Molly follows the dancers.

MOLLY (to Nomi)  
Go up by the spots, watch it from there.

NOMI  
Can I go up there?

ANNIE (yelling)  
Molly, we've got one minute!

JULIE (to Molly)  
Wouldn't it be great if one of these nights she fell down the stairs?

The dancers gather at the long steel staircase that leads to the stage. Molly sinks on her knees to fix Annie's costume. A delivery boy passes Nomi with a big bouquet of roses. He goes into a private dressing room - it belongs to the star of the show. For a moment Nomi can see a long leg, wearing sexy fishnet stockings.

In the background DAWN TORRENCE, the line captain, starts counting.

DAWN  
On ten: one, two --

14 INT. THE SHOWROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

14

Nomi is standing in the back, high up, the spotlights flanking her, watching the show. We see "Goddess" itself now -- hard-edged, rock and roll dancing, very high energy, but great showmanship.

We see her face as she stares, wide-eyed, a gorgeous girl bedazzled by an adult party.

AN ANNOUNCER (over music)  
Ladies and gentlemen, the Stardust proudly presents -- Miss Cristal Connors.

CRISTAL CONNORS, the new lead dancer, makes her entrance. Her movements are sensuous and fiery -- she looks like ice, but she is all smoldering fire.

Nomi has her nose pressed up against the glass, a little girl lost. Cristal's image reflects against the glass over Nomi - the two images almost becoming one.

We watch with Nomi as Cristal dances, first by herself and then with a partner. There is loud, roof-shaking APPLAUSE. Nomi stares.

15 INT. BACKSTAGE - AFTER THE SHOW

15

Lots of people -- photographers, TV cameras. Molly is hanging costumes up. Nomi is watching her, watching this scene.

Near them, Cristal is talking to reporters -- TV lights are on. With Cristal are three men, MR. KARLMAN, the hotel manager, in his 60's, silver-haired, the complete classy executive. ZACK CAREY, the entertainment director, is 42, good-looking, with a down-to-earth, cool, Armani style. PHIL NEWKIRK is heavy, sweating, in his early 50's, the public relations director.

Nomi watches this scene --

MR. KARLMAN

We could've brought anyone into this show -- LaToya, Suzanne. You name it. We wanted Cristal. Cristal Connors defines what Las Vegas is all about. She's dazzling, exciting, and very, very sexy.

A REPORTER

Miss Connors, how did you feel about the show tonight?

CRISTAL (a dazzling smile)

I think this is the best show I've ever been in. I just hope I can do it justice.

MR. KARLMAN

You did, my dear. And you will. We're thrilled that you're with us.

CRISTAL (smiles)

I'm thrilled to be here.

Nomi watches Cristal's cool, her polish.

A PHOTOGRAPHER

Mr. Karlman, can we have one of you handing Cristal the roses?

Someone brings a bouquet of roses.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
Only if I get to keep them.

Everyone laughs. Nomi watches her. They take photographs.

PHIL  
Thank you, everyone. Thank you very  
much.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
Thank you.

And she goes into a private dressing room as the Photographers  
and Reporters drift away. Molly comes up to Nomi.

MOLLY (smiles)  
She's great, isn't she?

NOMI (after a beat)  
She doesn't suck.

They laugh. The stage manager, GAY CARPENTER, 42, a former  
showgirl, comes up to Molly.

GAY  
Molly, Cristal needs you.

MOLLY (to Nomi, excited)  
Come with me.

A beat, and Nomi self-consciously shakes her head.

MOLLY (excited)  
Come on, you can be my assistant.

A beat, and Nomi follows her as Molly heads into Cristal's  
private dressing room.

16 INT. THE DRESSING ROOM

16

It is a beautiful room, literally an explosion of roses and  
mirrors.

MOLLY  
Yes, Miss Connors.

Nomi looks around this beautiful room.

CRISTAL  
Cristal, please -- You're -- I'm  
sorry --

MOLLY  
Molly Abrams.

Nomi hangs behind Molly, watching. Cristal doesn't even look at  
her.

CRISTAL  
This top's too tight, Molly. My breasts  
are just getting crushed in here --

MOLLY (looks)  
I'll loosen it.

CRISTAL  
Like about here, okay?

MOLLY (looks)  
Sure.

CRISTAL  
A little less, maybe. I want the  
nipples to press, but I don't want them  
to look like they're levitating.

MOLLY (smiles)  
Okay.

CRISTAL  
Thanks.

And she takes the top off and stands in front of the mirror  
bare-breasted. Molly and Nomi are behind her. She holds her  
breasts and rubs them a little as she looks into the mirror --  
they hurt. She catches Nomi's eye for the first time looking at  
her. Nomi looks quickly away.

MOLLY  
You were really great tonight, Miss --  
Cristal.

CRISTAL (casually)  
Thanks, darlin'.

She is taking her long eyelashes off, looking at herself in the  
mirror.

Molly turns to go, then sees a card with a big bouquet of roses.  
She touches the card.

MOLLY  
Andrew Carver sent you these?

Cristal puts cold cream on. She clearly wants Molly and Nomi to  
go.

CRISTAL (bored)  
If that's what the card says, that's who  
sent it.

MOLLY (smiles)  
I just love him.

Cristal says nothing, works at the mirror. She has so much  
cream on her face that she looks like a mime.

MOLLY (suddenly)  
This is my friend Nomi, she's a dancer,  
too.

Cristal looks like she's losing patience for a second. Nomi looks embarrassed. Cristal sees Nomi's embarrassment in the mirror, forces herself to be nice.

CRISTAL  
She is?

MOLLY  
She's really good.

Now Nomi looks really embarrassed. Cristal watches Nomi in the mirror.

CRISTAL (to Nomi)  
Where do you dance, darlin'?

NOMI (after a long beat)  
The Cheetah.

A beat, and then Cristal smiles at her a beat, and looks away to work on her eyelashes.

CRISTAL (to Nomi)  
I don't know how good you are, darlin'.  
And I don't know what it is you're good  
at, but if it's at the Cheetah, it's not  
dancing, I know that much.

She is working on her eyelashes, smiles, glances at Nomi in the mirror. Nomi looks at her a beat.

NOMI (quietly)  
You don't know shit.

And she turns and walks out. Molly stands there, shocked.

MOLLY  
I'm -- I'm sorry, Miss Connors.

Cristal turns on her suddenly.

CRISTAL (hard)  
Cristal. I told you.

MOLLY (after a beat)  
Cristal.

Cristal looks at her a beat, and then she smiles.

CRISTAL  
She has nice nails.

And she turns back to the mirror.

MOLLY  
She does them herself.

CRISTAL  
Maybe she can do mine sometime.

Molly looks at her.

17 EXT. REAR ENTRANCE - STARDUST - NIGHT

17

Molly sees Nomi walking ahead to Molly's car.

MOLLY (loud)  
Hey.

Nomi keeps walking.

MOLLY (loud, energy)  
HEY!

Nomi stops; Molly comes up behind her.

MOLLY (angry)  
Listen, I work here, okay? I need my  
paycheck. I don't want her pissed off  
at me.

NOMI (angry)  
I'm sorry.  
(then, softer)  
I'm sorry.

Molly looks at her, sees she really is sorry.

MOLLY  
Jesus, Nomi.

Nomi doesn't say anything, looks depressed. They get into the Toyota.

MOLLY  
I'll drive you to work.

NOMI  
I'm not goin'.

MOLLY  
He'll fire you.

NOMI  
I don't care.

MOLLY  
Yes you do.

NOMI  
No I don't.

Molly looks at her, sees how depressed she is. She starts the car.

MOLLY (exasperated)  
Okay. Let's go.

NOMI  
Where?

MOLLY (smiles)  
You know where.

And she takes off. Nomi looks at her, smiles a big little-girl smile.

NOMI  
Yayyyy.

It is a very little-girlish yay.

18 INT. THE TOYOTA/EXT. STRIP - NIGHT

18

The car swerves onto the Strip, into an explosion of neon and a sea of tourists.

NOMI (after a beat)  
What'd she say?

MOLLY (smiles)  
She liked your nails.  
(a beat)  
She said maybe you could do hers  
sometime.

Nomi turns to her. Her look is sudden, wild-eyed anger.

19 INT. THE SHARK CLUB - NIGHT

19

This is a gigantic club. There are hundreds of people. There is a main dance floor, but above it, on all sides of the walls, are balconies. The MUSIC is non-stop -- hip-hop and rave.

She is dancing with Molly. She's wearing that little slip of a dress, her hair is down. She looks gorgeous. But it's her dancing that grabs us. It is the first time we've seen her dance. She is all explosive energy -- it is very sexy and very fluid, but there is also a kind of vibrating jerkiness to it at times. What she does is almost primal.

Near the bar, a young man in his mid 20's is watching her. His name is JAMES SMITH. He wears a suit and a T-shirt. He looks hip. He is black.

James Smith just stares at her.

BOUNCER (to James)  
She can dance, huh?

JAMES  
 (after a beat, staring)  
 She thinks she can.

He watches her a long beat.

JAMES  
 I'm gonna dance with her.

BOUNCER  
 You can't do that. You're working.  
 T.C.'s gonna have your ass.

JAMES (watching her)  
 T.C.'s playing craps at the Riviera.

The other man shrugs, walks away. A beat, and James goes out on the dance floor -- the music blasts non-stop, one ear-splitting rave after another, strobe lights swirling.

Nomi is dancing with Molly -- they are laughing together.

JAMES (to Nomi)  
 Would you like to dance?

NOMI (as she dances)  
 I'm dancing.

JAMES (after a beat)  
 Would you like to dance with me?

NOMI (as she dances)  
 You good?

JAMES (a little pissed)  
 Yeah, I'm good.

MOLLY (laughs)  
 I'll get something to drink.

And she goes off. James starts to dance with her. They're very good together, very hot. His dancing is restrained power, restrained energy, something very powerful held in, while she is all out there, sizzling, kinetic.

NOMI (after a while)  
 You can dance.

JAMES (smiles)  
 I don't lie.  
 (a beat)  
 You can't.

NOMI  
 Then what am I doin'?

JAMES  
 You're teasin' my dick. You got potential, though. I could teach you.

NOMI  
I'm teasin' your dick?

JAMES  
Yeah.

And without breaking stride as she dances, she knees him very hard in the groin -- it is a perfect shot -- and as he hunches over in great pain --

NOMI  
I'm not teasin' it now, am I?

And she walks off the floor calmly as James goes down, bumping into another couple, who also fall. Another guy hauls off at someone who bumped into him -- James tries to stop it.

JAMES (in pain)  
I'm a bouncer, man. Be cool.

A MAN  
You be fuckin' cool.

And he hits James and suddenly there is pandemonium. People swinging, falling, beer being poured off the balcony -- glasses and bottles flying -- the music screeching -- as Nomi shoulders her way through the bodies -- it is a full-scale riot now.

And two other BOUNCERS grab her.

BOUNCER  
She started it.

Everything is flying now. The place looks like a war zone.

One of the Bouncers stares at this insane scene, dodging beer mugs --

ANOTHER BOUNCER  
Jesus Christ!

And the two bouncers, holding Nomi between them, start moving her out of the club towards the doors. Molly is caught in a tangle of people on the floor. She is looking around for Nomi. She looks alarmed.

MOLLY  
Nomi?

20 INT. A POLICE STATION - NIGHT

20

She stands with POLICEMEN and others in front of a booking desk. She still looks great in her hot little dress.

BOOKING SERGEANT  
What's the charge?

A COP  
Disturbing the peace.

BOOKING SERGEANT (to Nomi)  
You got I.D.?

NOMI  
Somebody ripped off my purse.

It's a lie; she wasn't carrying a purse all night.

BOOKING SERGEANT  
You employed?

NOMI  
I'm a dancer.

BOOKING SERGEANT  
What kinda dancer? Where do you dance?  
In a hotel room?

NOMI  
At the Cheetah.

BOOKING SERGEANT (grins)  
The Cheetah, huh?  
(to Cop)  
Print her. Put her in with the other  
dancers.

21 INT. THE JAIL - NIGHT

21

A MATRON walks her back, takes her into a cell. It is a large pen-like area; there are about twenty women in here. They all look like hookers. Some of them look more expensive; some of them look very hard, very tough. About half of them are in black.

Nomi doesn't look at all intimidated.

The Matron opens the cell -- she walks in.

MATRON  
Good night, sleep tight, don't let  
anyone bite.

There are HOOTS and CATCALLS. A tough-looking black HOOKER stands against a wall.

HOOKER  
Lookit what we got here, little  
pigeon-meat out there stealin' my green.

Nomi says nothing to her, walks away.

HOOKER  
I'm talking to you, pidge. Come on over  
here, pidge, I wants me some company.

There are LAUGHS and HOOTS.

NOMI (quietly)  
Don't fuck with me.

There are more LAUGHS and HOOTS.

HOOKER (grins)  
Well, shoog, you ain't comin' here, I'm  
goin' over there.

And she starts to head toward Nomi as there are more CATCALLS  
and HOOTS.

HOOKER (smiles)  
Nice, soft pigeon skin.

She touches Nomi's arm.

HOOKER  
Nice soft little moneymaker.

She touches Nomi's butt -- and as she does, Nomi suddenly grabs  
her by the hair, twirls her around, and digs her long nails into  
her face, slashing it. The Hooker screams. Nomi pushes her  
away, hard, against a wall.

The others stare at her as the black Hooker cries and holds her  
bleeding face. Nomi returns the stare -- and they slowly look  
away.

22 INT. THE JAIL - DAWN

22

Many of them are asleep -- in groups, some of them with their  
arms around each other, some alone. Nomi is sitting on the  
floor in a corner, her head against the wall, her eyes open,  
staring at nothing.

A MATRON comes in, opens the cell door.

MATRON  
Who's Malone?

NOMI (quietly)  
Me.

MATRON  
You're outta here.

She gets up, starts to head out, passes the black Hooker -- her  
face is crusted with blood. A beat, and she looks at the  
Hooker's face, her expression deadpan.

HOOKER (hard)  
What are you lookin' at, bitch?

Nomi's face shows no expression as she walks out of the cell.

MATRON (to Nomi)  
What happened to her face?

NOMI (deadpan)  
Somebody bit her.

The Matron gives her a look.

23 EXT. THE COURTHOUSE - DAWN

23

She is walking out. James Smith stands there, leaning against a wall. She looks at him, right through him, keeps walking. A beat, and he goes after her.

JAMES  
I bailed you out, girl. Don't that even get me a cup of coffee?

She keeps walking, doesn't even look at him.

JAMES  
All I did was tell you I'd teach you to dance.

NOMI  
I don't need nobody to teach me to dance.

JAMES (grins)  
That's 'cause you're a badass. You got your arm straight out, sayin' -- Back off, motherfuckers.

A beat, and then she stops and turns to him.

NOMI  
Okay. You've got that down. Back off, motherfucker.

And she puts her arm out a beat, then keeps walking. A beat, and he catches up to her again.

24 EXT. THE COURTHOUSE - DAWN/DAY

24

They've gotten outside -- the sun is coming up. They are near downtown Vegas -- it is a bizarre setting, the rising sun and all this neon everywhere still blazing and flashing. There are very few people on the street.

JAMES  
Damn! My head hurts! My dick hurts!  
You got me fired from my fuckin' job!

NOMI (after a beat)  
Yeah, well, shit happens, you know?

JAMES  
 "Shit happens?" What? That's it?  
 That's all I get from you? Fuckin'  
wisdom? That's it?

NOMI  
 That's it. You get wisdom.

They keep walking.

JAMES  
 Guess what? You ain't just a pain in  
 the head and a pain in the dick --  
 you're a pain in the ass, too.

NOMI (slight smile)  
 Life sucks, you know?

JAMES  
 "Life sucks", "Shit happens" -- Where do  
 you get this stuff, man? Offa T-shirts?

She smiles a little at that. She hears a HORN honking at her.

JAMES (seriously)  
 All I want is a cup of coffee.

She sees Molly in the Toyota, heading toward her.

NOMI (smiles)  
 Yeah?

JAMES (smiles)  
 Yeah.

The Toyota pulls up -- Molly swings open the door.

NOMI (to Molly)  
 You got a quarter?

Molly gives her a quarter. Nomi flips it to James, who catches  
 it.

NOMI (to James)  
 Buy yourself a cup.

25 INT. THE TOYOTA - DAY

25

She gets in; Molly takes off.

MOLLY (in a flurry)  
 Al's apeshit -- he says if you miss  
 another night -- how'd you get out? -- I  
 had to round up the cash.

NOMI  
Him.

In her rearview mirror, Molly sees James standing there, staring after them.

MOLLY  
How come?

NOMI  
'Cause I kicked him in the nuts.

MOLLY  
He liked it?

NOMI (straight)  
He must've.

26 INT. "THE CHEETAH" - THE DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

26

It is very small, very garish, very seedy. One big cracked and faded mirror, very harsh lighting. Loud rock MUSIC blasts from outside.

Standing in front of the mirror, putting make-up on, adjusting G-strings, pasties -- in various states of undress, are: NADIA, dark-haired... DEE, tall, Appalachian-looking, dishwater blonde... CARMi, short, tired-looking, her hair frizzy. They are all young and well-built.

Nomi stands there with them in front of the mirror. She is wearing cheap-looking lingerie that looks like it's from Frederick's of Hollywood. She is putting false eyelashes on.

CARMi (watching her)  
Fancy fancy.

DEE  
I like 'em. Where'd you get 'em.

NOMI  
Woolworth's

She looks at herself in the mirror -- the lashes don't exactly have the same effect that they had on Cristal. A beat, and she starts taking them off.

CARMi  
My tits look bigger to you?

She is topless.

DEE  
Oh, shit. Carmi thinks she's pregnant again.

NADIA  
You no period?

She speaks with a Russian accent.

CARMI

I don't know. I don't think so.

DEE

God, Carmi, don't you even know if you missed your own period?

CARMI

Nomi, they look bigger to you?

NOMI (looks)

Maybe a little.

CARMI

They hurt.

DEE

That's 'cause they're too damn big.

Dee is much smaller breasted. HENRIETTA comes into the small dressing room. Her stage name is Henrietta Bazoom, though everyone calls her Henry. She is in her 50's. She is very fat. She speaks in a gravelly, guttural growl and always wears what passes for a low-cut evening gown. She has a bottle of bourbon in her hand. All the girls say "Hi, Henry". She sits herself down in the only chair and takes a big slug of the bourbon.

HENRIETTA

Jesus fuckin' Christ, it's like a Japanese convention out there.

DEE

You better get your "little-weenie" jokes cranked up, Henry.

HENRIETTA

This thing isn't working again.

She is pressing her elbows against her sides, then flapping them against her sides, looking at herself in the mirror.

Nomi slaps her on the back, hard. When she does, Henrietta's breasts suddenly pop high out of her dress and pop back in.

NOMI (smiles)

Okay?

HENRIETTA

I think I've gotta oil the damn thing. Do it again.

Nomi hits her on the back again and her breasts pop out and back in again.

HENRIETTA

(to herself, growling)  
Made in Japan.

Henry takes another slug of bourbon and starts to waddle out. As she does, AL TORRES comes into the room. He is the club manager -- in his 40's, heavy, swarthy. With him is PENNY, a big, svelte and very young blonde.

AL  
Okay, ladies, this here's Hope.

They laugh, catcall.

AL (to the others)  
Cut it out. Hope, this is Tiffany.  
Heather, Farah and Lea.

PENNY (smiles)  
My name isn't Hope. My name's Penny.

AL (to Penny)  
They want class, dumb-dumb. They  
don't want to fuck a Penny. They want  
to fuck a Tiffany or a Hope or a  
Heather. This is a class joint.

27 INT. THE CHEETAH - NIGHT

27

The club is very dark, but large and spotlighted. Spread around the big room are three platforms with brass poles. At the side of the room is a long bar. The place is full. There are no women here, except for the performers. Many of the customers are Asian.

Henrietta Bazoom is up on the stage, under the big spotlight. Occasionally, she waddles out onto the runway-bar. She is heavily sweating in her low-cut evening gown. Her voice is a boozy snarl from hell.

HENRIETTA  
You know the difference between Japanese  
women and Chinese women. The Japanese  
women say Nip-on-these --

She flounces her heavy breasts inside the gown.

HENRIETTA  
And the Chinese women say Chow-on-chow.

She cups her pubic area. There are lots of LAUGHS.

A beat, and she jabs her elbows to her sides and her enormous breasts pop out and then back in again. There are howls of LAUGHTER.

A CUSTOMER  
Pull your dress up.

HENRIETTA  
 Honey, you could never handle me. With  
 all these wrinkles of fat --  
 (jiggles around a little)  
 -- you'd never even find the thing. I'd  
 have to piss on you to give you a clue.

Lots of LAUGHS.

28 INT. THE DRESSING ROOM

28

Al talking to Penny -- some of the other girls are ready and heading out into the club. Nomi is working on her nails.

AL (to Penny)  
 You ever done a lap dance before?

PENNY (after a beat)  
 No.

AL  
 You talk 'em into it. Fifty bucks a pop. You take 'em in the back. Touch and go -- they touch, they go. You touch 'em, but they can't touch you.

PENNY (smiles)  
 That's good.

AL  
 If they come, it's okay. If they take it out and come on you, call the bouncer. Unless he gives you a big tip. If he gives you a big tip it's okay. You got it?

A beat, and Penny nods. She looks scared.

PENNY (in a little voice)  
 Okay.

A beat, Al grins and turns to Nomi, who is about to go out.

AL (hard)  
 And you. Where the fuck were you last night?

NOMI (sweetly)  
 I was having my period, Al. You don't want me to get blood all over the place, do you?

AL  
 (after a beat, hard)  
 I'm gettin' real tired of your shit, kid.

They look at each other a long beat. He turns back to Penny who sits there looking scared.

AL (to Penny)  
One more thing. If you wanna last longer than a week, you give me a blowjob. First I get you used to the money, then I make you swallow.

A beat, he grins, and walks out. Penny sits there, looking like she's going to cry.

PENNY  
Was he serious?

Nomi looks at her, sees how vulnerable she looks.

NOMI  
No. He's all right.

She goes to Penny, puts an arm around her.

NOMI (tenderly)  
Hey. You'll be fine.

Penny holds her.

29 EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE THE CHEETAH - NIGHT

29

A big stretch limo pulls up. Getting out of it are Cristal Connors, wearing a Lanvin black leather mini with stiletto heels and a beautiful lace top; Zack Carey, the entertainment director of the Stardust; Phil Newkirk, the PR head; and two Japanese businessmen in their fifties with bodyguards.

30 INT. THE CHEETAH - NIGHT

30

Henrietta up onstage. She is singing in her truly horrible voice:

HENRIETTA  
The farmer in the dell --  
The farmer in the dell --  
I had a cherry once --  
But now it's shot to hell.

Lots of laughs, catcalls. At the same time Cristal's party is coming in.

A CUSTOMER  
Get off the stage!

HENRIETTA  
You better shut your hole, mine's makin' money!

LAUGHS.

HENRIETTA  
 You know what you call that useless  
 piece of skin around a twat? A woman.

More LAUGHS, CHEERS.

Cristal's party is led to a special table by two bouncers.

HENRIETTA (very loud)  
 Thank you... and good night.

She starts to flounce and waddle off. There are lots of CHEERS.

A CUSTOMER  
 Come on back! Come on back!

She suddenly leans down, close to the customer, jabs her sides with her elbows -- and her breasts pop out and hit the customer in the face. He almost falls off his chair.

Hysterical laughter and Henrietta is gone.

FROM CRISTAL'S POV, we watch the club as it explodes in full seedy glory in front of her. Rock MUSIC blasts very loudly. The three platforms have girls dancing on them under spotlights. Penny is on her back on the long bar-runway, crawling around. She is completely naked. Men are inches from her open body.

Cristal and the others sit at a table. She looks at a girl on one of the platforms, dancing with the brass pole. It is Nomi. She is topless. Nomi sees them. Cristal smiles at her a little. Nomi looks away from her, dances with the brass pole.

As we see Nomi dance, we see that, while the other girls on the platforms are basically stripping, Nomi is really dancing, putting on the same kind of wild energy into it that we saw her do at the Shark Club. Cristal keeps her eyes on her.

The Japanese men are laughing, talking excitedly among themselves. They are watching Penny who, looking very scared, makes her way down the long runway-bar on her back, her legs open.

ZACK (to Newkirk)  
 What did he say?

NEWKIRK  
 He says in America, everyone's a  
 gynecologist.

Zack smiles, looks at the Japanese man for a second, then looks away. His eyes are on Nomi. Cristal is watching Nomi, too. And then she sees Zack watching Nomi.

CRISTAL (smiles, to Zack)  
 You like her?

ZACK (smiles)  
 I like you.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
I'll buy her for you.

The SONG ENDS and Nomi heads back to the dressing room. She doesn't even glance at Cristal's table.

31 INT. THE DRESSING ROOM.

31

She is sweated, wiping the sweat off of herself with a towel. Henrietta is there, looking deadpan, at herself in the mirror, the bottle of bourbon in her hand. Al Torres comes in.

AL (angrily, to Nomi)  
What the hell you doin' in here? We got a bunch of spenders out there, put your nightie on.

HENRIETTA (quietly)  
Tell him to go fuck himself.

Nomi looks at him; looks like she's going to.

AL (warning)  
I'll kick your ass out of here.

They look at each other a beat.

HENRIETTA (quietly)  
Tell him. Do yourself a favor.

She just stares at herself in the mirror. Al and Nomi are still looking at each other.

NOMI  
Okay.  
(a beat)  
I'll put my nightie on.

And she turns and heads for the other corner of the room.

32 INT. THE CHEETAH - NIGHT

32

There are other girls up on platforms now -- Nomi circulates among the tables; she wears a very short red negligee. We see Al watching her a few steps back. We see that she is avoiding Cristal's table. Dee is there, talking to Cristal. They both look at Nomi, but we can't hear what is said.

Nomi goes up to a group of guys at a table.

NOMI (smiles)  
Hi, my name is Heather. Would you like to have a private dance with me?

A GUY  
Can I suck your tits?

The other guys at the table laugh. Nomi forces a smile.

She is too far away from the entrance to notice that James Smith has entered. He, however, sees her. He chooses a table close to the wall, in a dark spot.

At the table with the drunk guys:

NOMI

You can't touch me, but I can touch you.  
I'd really love to touch you.

A GUY

I know where you can touch me.

The guys at the table laugh. Dee motions to Nomi, who leaves the table and goes to her. Al watches them talking. We can't hear what they're saying. Nomi is shaking her head.

Al goes up to Dee and Nomi.

AL

What's goin' on?

DEE (after a beat)

They want a private dance with her.

She indicates Cristal's table.

AL

So -- great.  
(to Nomi)  
Get over there.

Nomi looks at him a beat, and then heads over toward Cristal's table. Al, a few steps back, watches her. James Smith is watching from a distance, inconspicuous.

At Cristal's table, Nomi forces a smile.

NOMI

Hi, my name's Heather, would you --

CRISTAL

Hi, Nomi. I like your nails.

She holds her hand, looks at the nails. Nomi pulls her hand away.

CRISTAL

(looks at her, smiles)  
We'd like you to have a private dance  
with both of us.

She indicates Zack. Nomi looks at Zack; his look says "It's not my idea."

NOMI (after a beat)  
We don't do that. One at a time, no women.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
A hundred dollars.

NOMI  
I'm sorry, that's the rules.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
Two hundred. You just do Zack and I'll watch.

Nomi looks at her a beat, then slowly shakes her head, her eyes still on Cristal's.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
Five hundred.

They still have their eyes on each other.

AL (behind her)  
Done.

Nomi looks at Al. She doesn't want to do this.

AL  
I said done.

Cristal smiles.

33 INT. THE CLUB - NIGHT

33

We see Nomi leading Zack and Cristal through the club. We see Al and James, in separate places, watching them. She leads them through a hanging bamboo curtain.

34 INT. THE BACK ROOM

34

It is very darkly lighted. There are couches here. We see other girls, shadowed, vague, in other parts of the room, dancing, completely naked, in front of sitting men.

NOMI (to Zack)  
Sit here. I'll change the music.

She moves a few steps away from them.

CRISTAL  
I think I'll sit here.

She sits so that she will be sitting behind Nomi, facing Zack.

ZACK (quietly)  
What's this about, Cris?

CRISTAL (smiles)  
It's about fun.

The MUSIC GOES ON. It is blasting, heavy metal rock and roll: Aerosmith.

And Nomi comes back and stands in her nightie in front of the sitting Zack. She very slowly takes off her nightie. Her body is stunning. She is completely naked. Zack looks at her body. Behind her, Cristal looks at her body.

Nomi leans in very close to Zack... her breasts brushing his face... as her body starts to move... he smiles, looks at Cristal... and then, as Nomi moves against him, his smile fades... and this is suddenly very sensuous, very serious... her body is up against his as she moves... and then she turns.

She presses her nakedness against his lap... he puts his head back... she looks up, as she presses against him... her eyes are on Cristal's, who isn't smiling now either... whipping her long hair... Zack raises his hands to hold her hips, stops himself... as she presses herself squiggling, dancing against him, her butt hard into his lap, she cups her breasts, squeezes them, throws her hair back, her eyes on Cristal.

35 INT. OUTSIDE THE BACK ROOM - NIGHT

35

James Smith stands at the other side of the bamboo curtain, watching her body, rapt.

ANOTHER BOUNCER  
What are you doin' here, man?

JAMES  
(after a beat, looks at him)  
Nothin'.

ANOTHER BOUNCER  
You want it, you pay for it.

And James moves away.

36 INT. THE BACK ROOM

36

She turns, faces Zack again, moving, dancing... and sits across Zack's lap, her breasts against his face... her eyes directly on his... he puts his head farther back... she moves her head closer... covers his head with her long, luxuriouant red hair... as he arches, moves his head back and forth... it is still hidden in her hair... and he stops moving suddenly as the SONG ENDS.

A long beat. She kisses his neck gently and flings her hair back off of his face.

Zack looks at her a very long beat -- their eyes are on each other.

CRISTAL (behind them)  
Thank you.

And Nomi gets up and turns to her. Her face is expressionless as she looks at Cristal, but there is a triumph in her eyes. She's still completely naked.

Cristal opens her bag, counts out five one hundred dollar bills and holds her hand out with the money. A beat as they look at each other, and Nomi takes the money, reaches for her nightie, and walks out the bamboo curtain.

Cristal and Zack look at each other a beat.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
It was fun, wasn't it?

ZACK (straight)  
You're such a bitch.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
But you love me. Can you walk?

He looks at her. And starts to get up, slowly.

37 INT. THE DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

37

All the girls are getting dressed. Al comes in, puts his hand out. Nomi peels two hundred dollars off, hands it to him. Her face is expressionless.

AL (grins, to Nomi)  
Hey, you oughta go out and celebrate.

She doesn't even look at him.

DEE  
We can go over to my place and smoke some dope.

CARMI  
You still got that Thai stuff?

NADIA (Russian accent)  
Russia, end of day, salami and vodka.  
Here, marijuana. God bless America.

DEE  
Nomi. You wanna come?

NOMI  
Not me.

She looks very disturbed. She starts to head out.

AL (grins)  
 Look at her. She pulls five hundred off  
 a lap dance and she acts like somebody  
 died.

38 INT. THE TRAILER - DAY

38

She is asleep on the couch -- someone is BANGING on the door. Half asleep, she goes to it, opens it. James Smith stands there wearing his shades. She starts to slam it. He stops it with his foot.

JAMES  
 Hear me out, okay?

She tries to close it. He stops it with his foot.

JAMES  
 You got more natural talent when you  
 dance than anybody I ever seen.

He keeps his foot in the door; she looks at him.

JAMES  
 I've seen a lot of dancers. I studied  
 in New York. Alvin Ailey. Man, you  
burn when you dance.

NOMI  
 You said I couldn't

JAMES  
 You gotta hold some of it in. You gotta  
 learn some shit. Dancing ain't fucking.

She pushes on the door again.

NOMI  
 What is that -- more wisdom? I know  
 that.

JAMES  
 No you don't. You dance like when you  
 fucked that guy last night.

NOMI (getting angry)  
 What guy?

JAMES  
 That guy with the chick, you took 'em in  
 the back.

NOMI  
 I didn't fuck him --

JAMES  
 Yeah you did, you fucked him and  
 her --

NOMI

You followin' me around? I didn't fuck anybody --

JAMES

I saw you! Everybody got AIDS and shit, what is it that you think you do? You fuck 'em without fuckin' 'em. That's what you do. It ain't right. You got too much talent for it to be right.

Suddenly she pushes the door in his face.

NOMI (exploding)

Get outta here!

He stumbles backwards.

JAMES

Bitch! I told you the truth!

NOMI

Talking that shit - who do you think you are?

She disappears, slamming the door. James walks away.

JAMES

You want me to go - I'm outta here!

He gets to his car. Suddenly the door opens again.

NOMI (straight)

I don't ever want to see you again.

James has started his car. He steps on the gas. The car heads right for the trailer, where she stands. She doesn't move an inch. He steps on the brake an inch away from her.

JAMES (loud)

You got too much damn talent.

NOMI (loud)

Yeah?!

But she is touched by what he said. She is trying to maintain her anger. James puts his car in reverse.

JAMES (loud)

Yeah! Fuck you!

He pulls away, with a lot of noise.

NOMI

Fuck you too.

But she doesn't yell anymore, so James can't hear it. A beat, as she looks after the disappearing car. It looks like she is going to cry.

39 EXT. OPPOSITE THE LUXOR - DAY

39

She sits in front of the enormous sphinx. It is jammed with tourists. She wears her jeans, boots, and her black leather jacket. She is curled onto herself, her head on her arms, lost in her thoughts.

Molly is suddenly there.

MOLLY (very excited)  
I think I got an A!

NOMI  
Yayyy!

She seems very excited, but we know from how she was sitting that she's forcing it. They hug and laugh. They run across the road zigzagging between the cars.

MOLLY (excited)  
Four more classes and they're gonna have to give me that degree.

They reach the curb.

A good-looking man in his 30's walks by them wearing a beautiful suit. He looks over at them, smiles, keeps going.

Arm in arm, they walk after him.

MOLLY  
Hunk City.

NOMI  
Let's tie him up.

They laugh, follow him.

MOLLY  
Look at those buns. I am frisky. I haven't gotten laid in six months -- my right hand's so tired I can hardly thread a needle.

NOMI (laughs)  
Use the left one.

MOLLY  
For threading a needle?

They laugh.

40 INT. SHOPPING MALL - LATER

40

A series of short shots of flashy window displays.

We end up on a black dress in the window at Versace. They are looking at it.

NOMI (after a long beat)  
I like that.

They stare at it.

MOLLY (after a beat)  
I can make that.

NOMI (after a beat)  
Yeah?

She is still staring at the dress.

MOLLY  
Yeah. We'll go down to the fabric store.

NOMI (suddenly)  
I want to buy it. I've got the money.

MOLLY  
Save it. I'll make it.

She starts moving away -- Nomi stops her.

NOMI  
I want to buy it.

MOLLY  
Why?

She laughs.

NOMI (laughs)  
I don't know. I just do.

She looks back at the dress.

NOMI  
(quietly, earnestly)  
I never had a dress like that.  
(a long beat)  
It'll look great on me.

A beat, and she looks at Molly seriously.

NOMI  
Won't it?

MOLLY  
(after a beat, smiles)  
Yeah.

41 INT. VERSACE - DAY

41

There is no one else in this very fancy store. Molly sits, waiting for Nomi to come out of the changing room. A haughty woman CLERK watches her.

THE CLERK

May I show you anything while you're waiting.

MOLLY

Um -- no, thanks.

She looks self-conscious sitting there. A beat, and Nomi comes out of the changing room in the black dress. She looks sensational.

She goes to a mirror, looks at herself a long beat, her face expressionless. And then she smiles at herself slowly and turns excitedly to Molly, who has been watching her.

NOMI (to Molly)

What do you think?

THE CLERK (a little cool)

It looks quite good on you.

MOLLY

(after a beat, smiles)

It doesn't suck.

Nomi turns, laughing, to the mirror and looks at herself again. The Clerk looks haughtily away.

42 EXT. OPPOSITE EXCALIBUR - DAY

42

They are coming out of an elevator, walk to a parking place.

NOMI (excited)

I can't believe I bought it!

She laughs.

MOLLY

We'll celebrate, I'll buy you a burrito. I'll even buy you some fajitas.

NOMI (laughs)

Fajitas! Oh boy!

Her laugh dies.

NOMI

I can't. I'm on early. Al's on my back.

MOLLY (smiles)  
I'll drive you.

NOMI (happy)  
Okay.

Molly stops dead suddenly.

MOLLY (overdone reaction)  
Oh my God.

Nomi follows her look. A big poster says -- "Coming soon -- Andrew Carver." There is a huge blow-up photograph of Carver. Nearby is a photograph and a poster advertising "Goddess" at the Stardust with a photo of Cristal Connors.

MOLLY  
(wide-eyed, overdone)  
He's coming here?

Nomi looks at her and laughs. They keep walking.

NOMI  
Maybe you can meet him.

MOLLY (laughs)  
Are you kidding? I wouldn't know what to say to him.

NOMI  
Say -- "Andrew, I can't even thread a needle anymore."

They laugh.

43 INT. THE CHEETAH - THE CLUB - LATE AFTERNOON

43

Nomi is onstage with Penny. They are both naked, dancing around poles to a hard rock song. There are only a few customers. Nomi, while continuing her dance, bends over to Penny.

NOMI (whisper)  
Look at that guy.

Penny looks. An older guy is sitting in front of them. He is sweating. He is moving his arm, his hand hidden behind the balustrade.

PENNY (shocked, whisper)  
He's jerking off!

NOMI  
It's sick.

The music ends, they walk down the stage, while Carmen and Dee take their place.

NOMI  
 (very loud, pointing)  
 It's slippery there.

They laugh, passing the guy - whose hand is now hidden under a handkerchief.

As Nomi walks back to the dressing room a hand touches her arm. She spins, knocks it off, sees it is Phil Newkirk, the PR guy from the Stardust. He's alone.

PHIL  
 I'm sorry.

She looks at him.

PHIL  
 Do you remember me?

She nods.

PHIL  
 There's a spot in the chorus line.  
 We're auditioning tomorrow morning.  
 Maybe you want to try out.

She looks at him a long beat.

NOMI (hesitant)  
 Me?

PHIL  
 (after a beat, grins)  
 Yeah. You.

NOMI (after a long beat)  
 You came down here to ask me?

PHIL (grins)  
 I saw you dance, I thought...

He smiles at her. A long beat.

NOMI  
 She sent you, didn't she?

PHIL (after a long beat)  
 Nobody sent me. Be there at ten.

A beat, as they look at each other and he gets up and starts heading out. She watches him.

Behind her, a DRUNK at a table, yelling.

THE DRUNK  
 Come on! Take it off! I wanna see the  
 pimples on your ass!

She turns, stares at the Drunk a beat. There is disgust and fear in her eyes. In the background Henrietta has come onstage.

HENRIETTA  
 Thirty years ago I was a beautiful woman. Men did this to me - and I enjoyed it thoroughly.

44 INT. THE TRAILER - NIGHT

44

She swings the door open, comes charging in.

NOMI  
 Molly? Molly?

Molly runs out of the bathroom. She's been in the shower, her hair is full of soap.

MOLLY  
 What's the matter? What is it?

She looks at Nomi. Her eyes are wide, her mouth open. She looks like she is out of breath.

45 EXT. OPPOSITE STARDUST - MORNING

45

Nomi is walking towards the hotel, where we see the big billboards of Cristal Connors. Suddenly she stops, hesitates and turns around.

NOMI  
 I can't do this.

She passes Molly.

MOLLY  
 Yeah you can.

NOMI  
 No I can't!

She continues to walk away from the Stardust. Molly blocks her way, holding her by the arms.

MOLLY  
 I don't know if you can do it or not, but you gotta try! Okay?

Nomi doesn't answer, looks away.

MOLLY  
 (after a beat)  
 Look at me: I haven't made a whole lotta headway in my life --  
 (she shrugs)  
 -- but I'm still tryin'.

She laughs a little to herself.

MOLLY (a sad smile)  
Shoot, I didn't think I'd ever end up in  
Vegas sewing G-strings.

She laughs a little again. Nomi looks at her, sees there are tears welling in her eyes. She reaches over and holds Molly's hand.

NOMI  
You got an A on your test, right?  
You're going to school. You're going to  
have your own dress shop one day.  
(a beat)  
Right?

A beat, and Molly looks at her and smiles.

MOLLY  
Right.  
(a beat)  
Get out of here.

A beat, Nomi smiles, and she gets out.

46 INT. THE SHOWROOM - THE STARDUST - DAY

46

She comes out of the dressing room. There are already about twenty girls onstage. She is wearing pink tights and dancing shoes. Her hair is up in a bun. She looks at the girls onstage. They are wearing high heels, fishnet tights, G-string leotards.

She looks very out of place. As she stares at them, looking scared, a man passes her. TONY MOSS is the producer of "Goddess". He is in his mid 40's, aggressive, good-looking, New York. He glances at her.

TONY  
Hey, Pollyanna!

NOMI (very startled)  
What'd you call me?

TONY (grins)  
You look like Pollyanna.

He grins, keeps going. A beat, and she looks at the other girls onstage again and heads back into the dressing room.

47 INT. THE DRESSING ROOM

47

She is alone in this big room. She stares at herself in the mirror. She looks scared. A beat, and then she gets suddenly very busy. She puts some make-up on. She takes a pair of pantyhose out of her bag. She puts the pantyhose on and rolls up her leotards high on the side. She looks at herself, doesn't like the way she looks. She takes a safety pin and makes the leotard a little more V-necked so her breasts show more. She looks at herself again. A beat, and she lets her hair fall down.

48 INT. THE SHOWROOM - STARDUST

48

She goes out onstage, looking determined if not comfortable, and joins the other girls.

Bright spotlights suddenly go on -- she can't see who is out there watching her in the showroom.

Tony Moss comes up onstage, looks the girls over. With him is his choreographer, MARTY JACOBSEN, in his early 30's, long-haired, androgynous-looking.

TONY (smiles)

Ladies, I'm Tony Moss, I produce the show. Some of you've probably heard that I'm a prick. I am a prick. I got one interest here, and that's the show. I don't care whether you live or die. I want to see you dance and I want to see you smile. I don't need you if you can't smile. I don't need you if you can't show. I don't need you if you can't sell. Spread out, ladies, let me look at you.

They spread out across the vast stage, the spotlights on. Nomi looks off-balance, very nervous.

Tony moves from one girl to the other onstage, Marty Jacobsen next to him. Nomi watches him from down at the end of the line.

Tony stops at a girl.

TONY

Jesus Christ, look at these tits, Marty. What are these, watermelons? This is a stage, babe, it ain't a patch. See ya.

A beat, and the girl walks offstage.

He moves over to another GIRL, looks her over.

TONY

I've seen you before, right?

THE GIRL  
Yes, Mr. Moss. I auditioned in January.  
You told me to get my nose fixed.

TONY (smiles)  
Nose looks good.

THE GIRL (big smile)  
Thank you, Mr. Moss.

TONY (smiles)  
Nice smile, too.

THE GIRL (bigger smile)  
Thank you, Mr. Moss.

TONY (after a beat)  
You know what, though? Your ears are  
stickin' out. They are. Come back and  
see me when you get 'em fixed. See ya.

The girl walks offstage.

He goes to another girl. He pinches her belly.

TONY  
Come back when you've fucked some of  
this baby fat off. See ya.

The girl walks offstage. He passes some girls, doesn't make any  
comments. He gets to a GIRL with very short hair.

TONY  
I hope you've got some nice wigs, tennis  
ball.

THE GIRL (smiles)  
I do.

He keeps walking.

TONY (to another girl)  
Can you spell MGM backwards? I bet you  
can't.

THE GIRL (smiles)  
MGM.

TONY (smiles)  
There you go.

He keeps moving, then stops at another GIRL.

TONY  
What kind of classes have you had?

THE GIRL (smiles)  
Ice skating classes, Mr. Moss, ballet  
classes, technique classes, stretch  
classes, jazz classes, jazz technique  
classes.

TONY (smiles)  
This show is called "Goddess". It ain't  
called "Classes". See ya.

And she walks away. In the back of the showroom a door opens.  
A woman walks in. It is Cristal.

He gets to Nomi, looks her over.

TONY  
What kind of classes have you had?

NOMI (smiles)  
I haven't had classes.

TONY  
Then what are you doing here?

NOMI (big smile)  
I'm watching you be a prick.

There is an almost collective intake of breath from the other  
girls, who all look at her. Tony Moss looks at her a long beat  
then grins.

TONY  
You ain't seen nothin' yet.

In the back of the showroom, Cristal smiles.

49 INT. THE SHOWROOM

49

The remaining girls are dancing to the HARD ROCK NUMBER we saw  
Cristal do in the beginning of the script. Tony Moss watches  
them.

Nomi looks like she's on fire -- her movements sensuous, fluid,  
and yet at certain beats almost spastic. It is the same kind of  
rhythm we saw her do at the Cheetah, but there is much more body  
tension in it.

Marty Jacobsen indicates her with his head to Tony Moss. Tony  
watches her a long beat.

The music ends. He confers with Marty.

He goes up onstage. The girls stand there, scared to death.

TONY  
Okay. I want you.

He points to a girl.

TONY

I want you.

He points to another girl. We see how nervous Nomi is as he looks up and down the girls. After the longest moment, he points to her.

TONY

And I want you.

(to the others)

Thank you, ladies. You wasted my time and yours.

The others troop off the stage. Nomi and the two other girls stand there. He motions them closer to each other. He looks at them a long beat. Cristal is slowly walking forward towards the stage.

TONY

Show me your tits.

They look at him a beat, hesitate.

TONY (loud, hard)

We've got a topless show here, for Christ's sake, let me see your tits!

A beat, and they take their tops off. Nomi looks strangely self-conscious. He goes from one to the other, looking closely at their breasts. He looks for a longer moment at Nomi's, then looks in her eyes. She meets his gaze.

TONY (smiles)

Very nice, ladies. Let's do it again. I want to see some real extension.

Another ROCK SONG from "Goddess" comes on. They start to dance.

TONY (loud, over music)

I said extension. Stretch 'em. I want to feel those uteruses stretching.

As they dance, he stays up onstage, watching their bodies and movements very closely.

TONY (loud)

Okay. That's enough.

He turns to one of the girls.

TONY

Try yoga or hanging from the ceiling or something. See ya.

She goes off and he looks closely at Nomi and the other remaining girl, who are standing there bare-breasted.

TONY (to Nomi)  
You got something wrong with your  
nipples?

NOMI (after a beat)  
No.

TONY  
They're not sticking up. Stick 'em up.

NOMI (after a beat)  
What?

TONY  
Play with 'em a little bit.

They are looking into each other's eyes. A beat, and she starts to gently massage her nipples. Cristal watches her.

TONY  
Pinch 'em a little. You want me to do  
it for you, I'll do it.

She looks at him a beat, then pinches her nipples gently. She sees that Cristal is watching her.

TONY  
I'm erect, how come you're not  
erect? Marty, bring some ice up here.

A beat, and Marty is there holding ice cubes. He gives them to Tony. Tony holds them out to Nomi.

TONY  
Put 'em on your tits.

She looks at him a beat and she suddenly knocks his hand away, knocks the ice cubes out of them. She starts heading off the stage.

Tony stares after her. Cristal watches her leave.

TONY (to Marty)  
I called that one right. See ya,  
Pollyanna.

50 INT. THE DRESSING ROOM

50

She goes in. She is alone. She looks up in the mirror. She is, of course, topless. She's sweating. A long moment, as she looks at herself. We see tears welling in her eyes. And then she turns away from the mirror and starts, softly to cry. Behind her, Cristal stops by the open door and looks at her a long beat.

And then Nomi turns to her, crying, her mascara running. A long beat, then--

NOMI  
You got me the audition, didn't you?

A beat, and Cristal nods.

NOMI  
Why?

CRISTAL (after a beat)  
Maybe I like the way you dance. Maybe I like you. What difference does it make?

They look at each other.

NOMI (after a long beat)  
Did you enjoy that out there?

CRISTAL  
Yeah, I think I did, darlin'.

NOMI  
(after a beat, quickly)  
I hate you.

CRISTAL  
(after a beat, smiles)  
I know.

They look at each other, then --

CRISTAL (gently)  
Wipe your nose. Here.

She pushes a box with tissues towards her. A beat, as they look at each other -- then Nomi takes the tissues, her eyes still on Cristal -- and Cristal turns and goes.

51 EXT. THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE STARDUST - DAY

51

We see a SUPERVISOR gathered with a dozen uniformed bellman. James Smith is one of them. Suitcases are everywhere along the pavement. Big buses are parked nearby.

SUPERVISOR  
The orthodontist convention is over here --  
(he indicates left)  
The realtors are coming in in twenty minutes. Let's line 'em up.

The bellmen, including James, start moving suitcases. As he moves a couple, he sees Nomi walking out the front door. She looks destroyed. He looks at her a beat, drops the suitcases, and goes to her.

JAMES (warily)  
Hey.

He sees the shape she's in.

NOMI (quietly)  
Hey.

She doesn't look at him, but stops.

JAMES  
What are you doin' here?

NOMI (looks at him)  
I did an audition.

JAMES (in disbelief)  
You wanna be a showgirl?

She says nothing.

THE SUPERVISOR (yells)  
Hey, Smith -- what are you doin'?

JAMES (gently)  
Didn't go too good, huh?

She looks at him sadly.

JAMES (grins)  
Well, I'm happy about that.

She looks at him, flares.

NOMI  
Don't -- okay? I'm not in the mood.

THE SUPERVISOR (angrily)  
Hey, Smith -- I'm talkin' to you!

JAMES (seriously)  
You don't want to be in this kinda show.  
What you're doin' -- least it's honest.  
They want tits and ass, you give 'em  
tits and ass. Here, they pretend they  
want somethin' else, you still show 'em  
tits and ass.

She looks at him. The Supervisor is suddenly there.

THE SUPERVISOR (angrily)  
You want to work her, you work her on  
your own time, you hear me? Get over  
there and start linin' those bags.

James looks at him a beat.

JAMES  
I'm talkin' to her.

THE SUPERVISOR (in disbelief)  
What?

JAMES  
 I said I'm talkin' to her. I ain't  
 workin' her. I'm talkin' to her. And  
 you're interruptin' the conversation.  
 That's rude, man.

As James talks, Nomi starts to smile. The Supervisor just  
 stares at James in disbelief.

JAMES  
 (hard, to Supervisor)  
 Now get the fuck outta here, asshole.

THE SUPERVISOR  
 You're, you're --

He can't get the word "fired" out.

JAMES  
 And take my fuckin' jacket.

He takes his uniform jacket off quickly and throws it to the  
 Supervisor, who just stares at it, his mouth open. James puts  
 his arm around Nomi quickly and walks her away. She stops and  
 laughs.

JAMES (in mock anger)  
 Now look what you've done. You got me  
 fired again! Ain't you got no shame?  
 You're a real badass!

She looks at him and smiles. He puts his arm around her.

JAMES  
 Look what a beautiful day! Sun shinin',  
 neon blazin', money flowin'. Shit, I'm  
 gonna cheer you up! I'm gonna get you  
 the best meal in town!

52 INT. HIS CAR - DAY

52

It is a broken-down jalopy. James is driving very fast in a  
 very narrow alley. They are in a downtown, seedy part of Vegas.  
 There is MUSIC on, thumping rock and roll. Nomi is wolfing down  
 an enormous hamburger.

JAMES (smiles)  
 Man, you like that burger.

A beat, as he looks at her.

JAMES  
 Where you from?

NOMI (after a beat)  
 Different places.

JAMES (grins)  
 You sure like talkin' about you,  
 huh?

She looks at him. She finishes her hamburger. She burps. She laughs.

53 EXT. JAMES' PLACE - DAY

53

He stops the car. It is in front of a dilapidated old downtown building. She looks at him.

NOMI (evenly)  
 Where are we?

JAMES  
 My place.  
 (a beat; he grins)  
 I want to show you somethin'.

She looks at him evenly a long beat like she knows what he wants.

JAMES  
 You think it's about your pussy, don't  
 you?

A beat, she looks at him.

JAMES (smiles)  
 You scared?

NOMI  
 (after a beat, cold)  
 I can take care of my pussy.

He looks at her a beat, then nods. He opens the door.

54 INT. JAMES' PLACE - DAY

54

She steps in behind him. It is a very large room in a state of disarray. The walls are filled with photographs of James and others dancing. There is very little in the room, although the room is neat: a bed, a chair, a small table, a blaster on the nightstand.

JAMES (smiles)  
 Best suite in town. Had to beg and  
 plead to get it.

She goes to the walls, looks at the photographs of James and the others dancing.

NOMI  
 This what you wanted to show me?

JAMES (smiles)  
This nice big bed here, you mean?

They look at each other a beat. She smiles a little.

JAMES  
I wrote this number. It's about you.

NOMI  
You don't know anything about me.

He walks to a tape player on the floor.

JAMES  
I know you're a private dancer. I only need three other dancers. We could put it on at the Shark Club maybe.

She sees he is serious, is struck by his earnestness.

He hits a button. We hear a powerful RAP SONG booming through the warehouse.

JAMES (smiles)  
I'll show you.

And he starts to dance -- his movements are stylized, exaggerated, a combination of ballet and hip-hop.

JAMES  
Come on now, keep up with me. I know you can do it.

A beat, and she starts to dance with him -- trying to match his rhythm and movements. At first clumsy, she gets into it... and he dances over to a chair.

JAMES (as he dances)  
We work into the lap dance.

Sitting on the chair, he is still moving, dancing, sitting down. She faces him, dancing, standing over him and then against him -- the way she did with Zack at the Cheetah.

JAMES  
That's it -- that's it -- you got the moves. Come on down close to me.

And she bends over him, dancing -- his groin is against her body now -- her face very near him as they do a very sexy, exaggerated, stylized bump and grind. And as they do it, he kisses her on the lips.

The kiss turns more and more passionate. He moves his hands up and down her body, under her top, between her legs... and she suddenly freezes, turns away.

A beat -- he can't believe she's stopped.

JAMES  
What?

NOMI  
I have my period.

JAMES  
Yeah, right!

NOMI  
Think I'm lying?

JAMES  
Let me check.

Before he can touch her, she walks to the door.

JAMES  
You don't fool me. I see you.

She stops in the doorway, looks at him, surprised.

NOMI  
What do you see?

He walks towards her.

JAMES  
I see you hidin'.

NOMI  
From what?

JAMES (after a beat)  
From you.

They look at each other a long beat. Then she walks out onto the street.

55 EXT. JAMES' PLACE - DAY

55

James appears in the doorway.

JAMES  
You got into some bad shit someplace,  
didn't you?

She does not look back anymore.

NOMI  
Thanks for the hamburger.

56 INT. MOLLY'S TRAILER - DAY

56

She walks in. Molly is working on a dress at her sewing machine.

As soon as she sees her --

MOLLY (in a flurry)  
Where were you? What happened? Tony  
Moss called, said to call him right  
away.

Nomi just stares at him.

MOLLY (excited)  
Here... here's the number. Call him.

Nomi stands there, frozen.

MOLLY (excited)  
I'll call him.

She dials the number.

MOLLY  
Mr. Moss, please. It's Nomi Malone.

She hands Nomi the phone.

NOMI (on phone)  
Yes.  
(a beat)  
Yes.  
(a beat)  
Okay.

She hands the phone back to Molly, stands there, staring, as if  
in a daze.

NOMI (very quiet)  
I got it.

MOLLY (loud, excited)  
You got it? You got it?

57 INT. THE CHEETAH - NIGHT

57

She walks in, wearing her jeans, boots, and black leather  
jacket.

Henrietta is up onstage, doing her act. She is singing.

HENRIETTA  
She's the yellow rose of Texas --  
She charges fifty bucks --  
She's the richest girl in Texas --  
And all she does is fucks.

She walks by Henrietta, through throngs of men.

HENRIETTA  
 Oh show me a home --  
 Where the buffalo roam --  
 And I'll show you a home --  
 Full of shit!

She walks into the dressing room as Henrietta is cheered in the club.

58 INT. DRESSING ROOM - THE CHEETAH - NIGHT

58

Al Torres is sitting there. Girls are coming in and out.

AL (to Nomi)  
 You're late.

She starts taking some of her cosmetics and other things out of a drawer, starts putting them into a bag.

NOMI  
 I'm gone.

She doesn't look at him.

NOMI  
 I got another job, Al.

AL (upset, gets up)  
 You goin' down to The Crazy Horse, Too?  
 They givin' you a better cut? I'll  
 match it.

NOMI  
 In "Goddess". At the Stardust.

He starts to laugh loudly. Henrietta walks in.

HENRIETTA  
 What's so fuckin' funny?

AL (laughing)  
 She's going down to the Stardust.  
 She's gonna be in the show.

HENRIETTA  
 Good for her. La-dee-dah-de-dah.  
 She'll be back.

She sits down in front of the mirror.

NOMI (to Henry)  
 No I won't.  
 (to Al)  
 I'll never come back!

AL (upset)  
 You're a fuckin' stripper, don't you get  
 it?

NOMI  
I'm a dancer.

AL (laughs)  
If you're a fuckin' dancer, then Henry  
here's the fuckin' Virgin Mary.

HENRIETTA  
(popping her tits)  
I got bigger tits than the fuckin'  
Virgin Mary! I got a bigger mouth, too.

Nomi looks at Henry a beat, then goes to her, hugs her quickly,  
kisses her on the cheek.

NOMI (tenderly)  
Bye, Henry!

HENRIETTA (a little teary)  
Goddamn it. You're the only one who can  
get my tits poppin' right.

They hug a beat, and then she heads out with her bag, doesn't  
look at Al.

NOMI (over her shoulder)  
See ya, Al.

There is the slightest smile when she says it.

AL (loud)  
I ain't hirin' you back. You hear me?  
Not even if you blow me.

And she walks out. He stands at the door, looking after her.

HENRIETTA  
You're a blowhard, Al, that's what you  
are. Sometimes I like you so much, I  
feel like blowin' you.

Al looks at her, genuinely shocked. He makes a face.

AL (quietly)  
Jesus, Henry.

59 EXT. JAMES' PLACE - NIGHT

59

Nomi knocks on the door.

NOMI  
James?

A long beat, and then the door opens. James stands there with a  
towel around him. He smiles.

NOMI (smiles)  
I got it!

JAMES (sleepy)  
Got what?

NOMI  
I'm in the show. In "Goddess".

It slowly dawns on James what she's talking about.

JAMES  
Oh, man.

He looks disgusted. They look at each other.

JAMES  
What about my number I wrote for you?

She looks at him a long beat. He looks away from her, sad.  
Behind James, we hear a woman's VOICE in his room.

THE VOICE  
James?

He starts to close the door. Nomi stops him, peers around him.  
She sees Penny, the young svelte stripper from the Cheetah. She  
is in bed, naked.

JAMES (eyes on Nomi)  
Be right there.

He closes the door. She looks at him a long beat.

NOMI  
She gonna be in your number?

JAMES (dismissingly)  
She can't dance.

NOMI (after a beat)  
But you're gonna teach her, right?  
She's got talent, right?

He looks at her a beat, shakes his head. There is an iron  
half-smile on his face.

JAMES  
Hey, you and me ain't got no ties.

NOMI (smiles a little)  
Dancing ain't fucking... right?

JAMES (after a beat)  
Yeah, that's right.

NOMI  
See ya.

She turns and walks away. James is watching her go down. The  
door opens behind him. Penny comes out, scantily dressed.

PENNY  
Who was that?

JAMES (after a beat)  
Somebody who wants to be in the number.

He doesn't look at Penny, is still staring down the stairs.

PENNY (coy)  
You're not going to give her my part,  
are you?

He turns to her, looks at her, cups her big breasts.

JAMES  
(smiles, to himself)  
She can't dance.  
(a beat, seriously)  
I wrote it for you.

60 INT. STARDUST - OFFICES - DAY

60

Nomi walks into an office. She is wearing the simple, classy, sexy black dress she bought at Versace. She wears high stiletto heels. She looks overdressed, of course, but magnificent.

A RECEPTIONIST looks her up and down suspiciously.

THE RECEPTIONIST  
Do you have an appointment?

NOMI  
I'm supposed to see Mr. Moss. I'm Nomi  
Malone.

THE RECEPTIONIST (after a beat)  
Go on back.

Nomi nods -- a slight beat, a slight hesitation, she gathers her gumption -- and heads back to an inner office.

61 INT. TONY MOSS' OFFICE - DAY

61

It is, surprisingly, very tastefully done.

Tony Moss sits behind a desk. With him in the room are: the choreographer, Marty Jacobsen... the stage manager, GAY CARPENTER, 42, a former showgirl... and the line captain, Dawn Torrence, 31, a former dancer who wears braces on her knees.

As soon as Nomi walks in --

TONY  
One day she looks like Pollyanna, the  
next day she looks like... I don't know,  
Lolita maybe. Nice dress.

She stands there self-consciously, clearly very nervous.

NOMI (smiles)  
Thanks. I bought it at Ver-sayce.

They stare at her. They don't get it. They don't know that she means Versace. She sees they don't get it.

NOMI  
In the Forum?

They try to hide their smiles, understand now.

TONY (a big smile)  
Oh yeah. Ver-sayce. I like  
Ver-sayce.

NOMI (self-conscious)  
Me too.

TONY (friendly)  
Okay. You know Marty. This is Gay, our  
stage manager. Dawn's our line captain.

They nod hi to her, look her over.

NOMI (nervous)  
Hi.

TONY (friendly)  
If you let me down, I'm going to lose my  
reputation for being such an all-knowing  
prick. I work very hard for that  
reputation, so don't do it. Deal?

He smiles. She looks at him, off-balance, in disbelief that he is being so nice.

NOMI  
(after a beat, smiles)  
Deal.

TONY  
Gay's gonna show you around.

Gay gets up, starts leading her out of the room.

MARTY (to Nomi)  
We'll do a run-through this afternoon.

NOMI (nervous)  
Okay.

They watch her, see how green she is.

TONY (seriously)  
Good luck.

NOMI (nervous, smiles)  
Thanks.

DAWN  
They always tell you that in Vegas  
before that take your money.

Tony and Marty laugh -- Nomi smiles a little

62 INT. STARDUST - BACKSTAGE - DAY

62

Gay is taking her through the dressing rooms, heading toward the stairs leading to the stage

GAY  
Maintain your weight, wear your make-up  
and costumes properly. Don't take your  
costumes home. Don't ever, ever go  
out onstage crying and eat plenty of  
brown rice and vegetables. Stay  
indoors, I don't want to see any tan  
lines. Do you eat plenty of brown rice  
and vegetables?

NOMI (after a beat)  
Sure.

GAY  
This is your table here.

She stops and turns on the lights around the mirror. Nomi looks at her dressing table, her mirror. It is a long way from the Cheetah. She stares for a long beat, then Gay keeps walking.

GAY  
I'll take you up to personnel. They  
want some information.

NOMI  
(after a beat, nervous)  
What information?

GAY  
The usual information.

Nomi looks nervous.

63 INT. PERSONNEL OFFICE - DAY

63

She sits in front of a middle-aged, very officious-looking WOMAN.

THE WOMAN  
Date of birth?

Nomi looks nervous.

NOMI  
7-3-73.

THE WOMAN  
Place of birth.

NOMI (after a beat)  
New York.

THE WOMAN  
New York, N.Y.?

NOMI  
Yes.

She keeps watching what the Woman is writing down.

THE WOMAN  
Nearest family members?

NOMI (after a long beat)  
Um, I don't have any family.

THE WOMAN  
(after a beat, looks at her)  
Deceased?

NOMI  
Yeah.

The Woman looks at her a beat.

THE WOMAN  
Have you ever been arrested... charged  
with a criminal offense?

NOMI (after a beat)  
No.

THE WOMAN  
Social security number?

NOMI (after a beat)  
I don't know.  
(a beat)  
I'm going to have to check that.

THE WOMAN (looks at her)  
Do that.

64 INT. CORRIDOR OF OFFICES - LATER

64

She is walking down the corridor. She looks disturbed.

Phil Newkirk comes down the corridor with Zack Carey, the entertainment director. They are laughing about something, then they see her.

PHIL (smiles)  
Hey, you got it, huh?

Nomi nods, smiles.

PHIL (smiles)  
Nice goin'. Zack Carey, this is... Nomi  
Malone.

ZACK (smiles)  
Uh -- sure, I remember her. Hi.

NOMI  
Hi.

This is the first time that she and Zack have seen each other since the lap dance at the Cheetah.

They shake hands a little clumsily, a little embarrassed.

PHIL (to Zack)  
Oh yeah! I'll bet you remember her.

ZACK  
(looks at her, smiles)  
Well, she's pretty... memorable.

He looks even more embarrassed.

ZACK  
I'm glad you're a part of the team.  
(a beat)  
Nice dress.

NOMI (smiles)  
Thanks. It's a Ver-sayce.

She still looks embarrassed.

As they head away, Phil starts to laugh. Zack turns back to her.

ZACK  
Versace.

He pronounces it correctly.

NOMI (taken aback)  
What?

ZACK  
Versace. That's how it's pronounced.

NOMI (mortified)  
Oh.

ZACK (smiles)  
You've got great taste. You look  
beautiful.

He says it gently, shyly, with feeling.

NOMI (smiles)  
Thank you.

And he turns and goes away.

65 INT. SHOWROOM STAGE - DAY

65

She stands there with two other girls in leotards. The leotards are Bob Fosse-style leotards, cut up so high on the sides that they reveal a part of the buttocks.

With her are Marty Jacobsen, the choreographer, and Dawn Torrence, the line captain.

MARTY  
This is Nomi -- Sonny, Nicky and you know Dawn.

They smile hi to her.

MARTY (to Nomi)  
They'll run through it once -- you just watch, then we'll blend you in.

DAWN (to Nomi)  
Have you eaten?

NOMI  
No.

DAWN  
What would you like?

NOMI (smiles)  
I don't know. Burger, fries, and a soda.

The other girls smile.

DAWN (to stagehand)  
Get her some brown rice, vegetables, and a bottle of Evian. Okay, let's do it.

Hard, THUMPING ROCK AND ROLL comes on and the three girls start to dance.

66 INT. SHOWROOM - STAGE - LATER

66

Nomi stares as the three girls dance -- twisting their torsos to the left, extending legs to the right -- then head to the right, left arm across, right leg going forward, then sweeping in ballistic jerky movements together across the floor.

67 INT. STAGE - LATER

67

Nomi dances with them as Marty and Dawn watch.

MARTY  
No, hold it. Stop!

The MUSIC STOPS.

MARTY  
Do it like this. Twist the turn, twist it.

Marty does it.

MARTY  
Do it without the music.

She does it, twisting her hip.

MARTY  
Okay. Music.

The MUSIC STARTS again as he does the movement with her.

68 INT. STAGE - LATER

68

Nomi, dancing with the others, as Marty stands next to her. The MUSIC is playing.

MARTY (over music)  
Hold it in. Control it.

Nomi does it slower.

MARTY  
I didn't say slower. I said more control.

Marty watches her a long beat. She keeps dancing.

MARTY  
Stay synchronized. Stay with them. One-two, one-two.

He watches her as she dances with the other girls. She is sweating.

69 INT. STAGE - LATER

69

She is dripping with sweat.

MARTY (grins)  
Thrust it. Thrust it. Thrust it.

Nomi really thrusts her hips in a kind of bump and grind done to dance.

MARTY  
Okay. That's enough.

The MUSIC STOPS.

MARTY  
(to other three girls)  
Thank you.

Nomi has an Evian bottle in hand, is taking a big slug.

DAWN (smiles, to Nomi)  
Good.

MARTY  
Do some heel work with her, Dawn. I'm worried about her balance.

NOMI (very tired)  
How long do you think it'll be before I can do the show?

MARTY (casually)  
You're starting tonight.

And he walks away.

NOMI (to Dawn)  
Tonight?

She looks petrified.

As Marty heads offstage, Tony Moss comes in through a back door.

TONY  
How'd she do?

He watches her as Dawn does some exercises with her.

MARTY  
She's no butterfly. She's all pelvic thrust. She prowls. She's got it.

TONY (watching her)  
I wonder how she got it.

MARTY  
She certainly didn't learn it.

TONY (watching her)  
She learned it all right, but they don't teach it in any class.

70 INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

70

She is in front of the mirror at her dressing table. Dawn stands next to her and is helping her with her makeup. Molly is working on her costume, which she is already wearing.

On either side of her dressing table are SONNY and NICKY, the two dancers we saw with her at Marty Jacobsen's run-through.

DAWN  
Use some more eyeliner.

Nomi does it.

DAWN  
Not too much -- darken the eyebrows a little.

MOLLY  
How do you feel?

NOMI (very nervous)  
Don't ask, don't ask, don't ask.

SOMEONE  
(yelling, very loud)  
Monkey alert!

DAWN (rolling her eyes)  
Oh no, not again!

And as they turn -- three monkeys come bouncing into the dressing room, jumping on tables, scurrying about, knocking things down. There are yells and screams as things are spilled. Stagehands come racing into the room after them.

A little HISPANIC MAN in his 50's comes in, very upset, wearing a black bolero outfit. The magic monkeys are his act.

GAY (as he comes in)  
Hector, damnit, I told you if this happened again --

HECTOR (as he passes her)  
So sorry, senora, so sorry. They got the heat. They make babies.

GAY  
Babies?

A monkey jumps up on Nomi's table, smears some makeup on as she watches wide-eyed... then looks at himself in the mirror, looking pleased, then looks at her and jumps away. She giggles.

Four or five tables away from her, two dancers -- ANNIE and JULIE -- we saw them in the beginning of the script -- are pushing and yelling at each other.

ANNIE (loud)  
You fucking slut! You touch my make-up again, I'll fucking kill you!

JULIE (loud, yelling)  
I'm a slut? You fucked that kid from  
 the pizza place!

ANNIE (loud)  
 You fucked the meter-reader!

Julie hurls herself at Annie as stagehands and others try to separate them... and then one of the monkeys, making his way back out of the room with stagehands in pursuit, jumps right up on both of them... as Annie and Julie scream.

Nomi is standing in front of the mirror, taking a long look at herself, Dawn and Molly next to her.

DAWN (gently, quietly)  
 Showtime.

And Nomi looks at her with panic in her eyes.

71 INT. BACKSTAGE - STAIRWAY

71

They are at the bottom of the long steel stairway leading from the dressing room to the stage. It is a dim, half-light down here.

They are ready to go up. We see Sonny, Annie, Julie, Nicky, SAL, a straight male dancer, and FELIX and Daryl, two gay dancers. Nomi is with them -- Molly and Dawn alongside her. Annie and Julie are still giving each other ugly looks.

Hector and a STAGEHAND run down the stairs with the escaped monkeys. As they go by them --

THE STAGEHAND  
 There's some shit on the stage.

SAL  
 They've always got the shits. It's  
 that damn garlic.

DAWN (after Stagehand)  
 Where?

THE STAGEHAND  
 Top left.

DAWN (to Nomi)  
 Watch your turns there, it's slippery.

We see Sonny put a vial to her nose in the half-light. She snorts the vial.

SONNY (to Nomi)  
 Want some toot?

A beat, and she shakes her head. Dawn pretends to look the other way.

A Stagehand brings a bowl of ice. Julie takes it first and passes it around. She puts ice cubes on her nipples, holds the ice there. The others take it and do the same thing.

A beat, and Nomi takes the ice and does it too. (All the dancers are, of course, topless). She sees Cristal coming out of her dressing room in costume. Molly is with her.

The dancers start to go up the stairs, passing Dawn who is halfway up.

DAWN

On ten. One, two --

Cristal approaches and looks at Nomi. Molly walks up to the staircase. Nomi suddenly hugs Molly.

NOMI

I love you.

DAWN

... Four, five...

The dancers rush up the staircase and arrive at stage level.

72 INT. STAGE

72

The dancers rocket onstage, almost ballistically, and start to dance.

Molly and Dawn arrive together backstage. We see them watching Nomi from their POV.

At first stiff, wary, quincy -- she starts getting into MUSIC... losing herself in it... letting it run through her veins.

Molly is smiling, watching her. At first Dawn is expressionless and then she starts to smile, too.

We HOLD ON Nomi's face as she hears APPLAUSE and dances. She smiles radiantly, but it isn't just the smile. Her entire being radiates.

AN ANNOUNCER (over music)

Ladies and gentleman, the Stardust  
proudly presents -- Miss Cristal  
Connors.

And Cristal comes dancing out to the front of the stage to HUGE APPLAUSE as Nomi and the others dance behind her. For a few moments, Nomi is right behind her so that it appears she and Cristal are dancing together. And then Cristal moves away to dance with Felix as the audience APPLAUDS her.

73 INT. STAGE - LATER 73

As they dance off and head, running, for the stairway.

74 INT. STAIRWAY 74

As they go charging at a breakneck pace to change costumes for the next number. They head down the stairs in this order: First Sal, then Julie, Annie, Nicky, Felix, Sonny, Daryl, Cristal and Nomi last.

75 INT. DRESSING ROOM 75

As they hurry in -- Dawn immediately shepherds Nomi to her table. As she gets to her table, Nomi sees an explosion of roses in a vase. She stops, stares a beat -- but Dawn is hurrying her. She starts taking her costume off, with Dawn helping her... but as she does, she opens the card.

We see it in CLOSEUP. It says: "GOOD LUCK, LOVE" and is signed by Zack Carey.

NOMI (to Dawn)  
Was I okay?

DAWN (smiles)  
You were just fine.

She is almost finished changing when Marty is there.

MARTY  
Your right-leg extension needs work,  
it's eight steps on the sweep, not six.  
I'll get somebody to work with you  
tomorrow. Be here at noon.

And Marty hurries off. Finished changing, she looks at herself in the mirror as Dawn heads away.

DAWN (to Nomi)  
Two minutes.

She looks at her flowers for a long beat, like a little girl lost, alone... and at that moment, Molly runs up to her.

MOLLY  
Yayyy!

Hugging, they dance around in a little circle and laugh.

NOMI (excited)  
Look what I got!

She indicates the flowers.

MOLLY (excited)  
Wow!

At the next table, Sonny is putting more makeup on.

SONNY (cynically)  
They'll be wilted by tomorrow.

MOLLY (angrily)  
They will not! Why don't you put some  
more of that shit up your nose, Sonny?  
(to Nomi)  
Come on, you gotta go!

And Molly leads her, running, toward the stairs.

76 EXT. IN FRONT OF THE STARDUST - NIGHT

76

She heads out with Molly into the parking lot. She has her roses in her arms. They are giggling, very up. When she steps out, she sees James standing there in the darkness. She keeps going.

JAMES (earnestly)  
Can I talk to you a minute?

She doesn't respond.

JAMES (quietly)  
Please?

NOMI  
Talk.

JAMES (earnestly)  
Alone?

Nomi looks at him a beat.

MOLLY  
I'll wait in the car.

NOMI  
I'll be right there.

She looks at James a long beat. He doesn't know how to begin.

JAMES (smiles)  
Who sent you the flowers?

NOMI  
None of your business.

JAMES (puts hands up)  
Okay, okay. Look, I just wanted to  
say --

He shrugs, embarrassed.

NOMI  
You and me ain't got no ties.

It's the same line he used to her.

JAMES (a long beat)  
I've got a problem with pussy, okay? I  
always have, I'm always gonna. But I  
meant what I said to you.

NOMI  
I'm not interested in your...  
problems.

JAMES (with difficulty)  
I did write it for you.  
(a beat, and then he smiles)  
But then I did tell her I'd teach her.  
And I did fuck her.

She looks at him, sees his honesty, his earnestness.

NOMI (evenly)  
Who you fuck is your business, I'm not  
makin' it mine.

James looks at her, exasperated by her coolness. He's getting a  
little angry.

JAMES  
Well, you know? It ain't like I'm  
seein' any money for writin' that  
number, I might as well at least touch a  
little pussy.

Zack Carey gets out of a brand-new black Ferrari nearby. She  
watches him.

JAMES  
Ain't you got nothin' to say?

NOMI (after a beat)  
No.

Zack is heading by them. He smiles at her.

NOMI  
Thanks for the flowers.

A beat. He stops, looks at her, glances at James up and down.

ZACK (smiles)  
Tony says you did great.

NOMI  
(after a beat, smiles)  
I never got flowers before.

ZACK (smiles)  
Really?  
(a beat)  
Well, I'm sure you'll get lots of them.

A beat, as they look at each other, he glances at James up and down again, and he heads toward the backstage door.

JAMES (grins)  
He gave them to you?

NOMI  
 Yes, he did.

She doesn't like his grin. She starts walking toward Molly's car. He keeps pace.

JAMES (grins)  
 What is he -- a pimp? Only people I know got pimp cars are pimps.

NOMI (angry)  
 He's the entertainment director.

JAMES (grins)  
 The entertainment director? That's what I said -- he's a pimp.

She stops, looks at him. She looks for a second like she's going to hit him -- as he grins at her -- and then she speaks sweetly, with great control.

NOMI  
 Good luck with your number, James. I'm sure you can teach her to be a great dancer.

And she goes off toward Molly's car. His grin dies. He didn't expect her to say that.

77 INT. TOYOTA/EXT. STRIP - NIGHT

77

She opens the door, gets in, she's got a big smile on her face, her flowers in hand. As soon as she gets in, Molly steps on the gas and they head out of the parking lot, turn onto The Strip, encased in a world of blazing, exploding phosphorescent neon.

NOMI (loud)  
I... want... to... party!

MOLLY  
 I've got another test tomorrow.

As they drive by the Volcano at the Mirage, which is just in the middle of erupting. Nomi stares at it.

Molly looks at her, sees how disappointed she is.

MOLLY  
 You can take the car.

NOMI  
 (staring at volcano)  
 It ain't a party without you.

Molly looks at her looking at the fiery Volcano.

MOLLY (touched)  
 I can make a chicken pot pie. We can  
 have our own party.

Nomi puts the roses to her nose, smells them. She turns  
 suddenly to Molly.

NOMI (loud)  
I... love... chicken-pot pie!

78 INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

78

They have changed. Molly wears an old robe; Nomi a  
 Harley-Davidson T-shirt. She has put her flowers in a vase in  
 the tiny living room. She is smelling her roses.

An Andrew Carver SONG is playing. Molly is only a few feet  
 away, in the kitchen, waiting for the pot pie.

NOMI (laughs)  
 What I really feel like doing is getting  
 laid.

MOLLY (mock-anger)  
 Don't start.

NOMI (laughs)  
 I do!

MOLLY (laughs)  
 Don't -- I mean it!

NOMI  
 Didn't you ever have a boyfriend here?

MOLLY (taking pie out)  
 Are you kidding? By the time the show's  
 over, the only people out there are  
 drunks, and slotheads, but... Andrew  
 Carver's my boyfriend.

She shrugs -- she has put the pie on a big plate.

MOLLY (excited)  
 This looks really good.

She cuts a piece -- Nomi tastes it.

MOLLY  
 How is it?

NOMI (after a beat)  
It's... better than getting laid.

They laugh. The phone rings. Molly picks it up, swallowing a big piece of pie.

MOLLY  
Hello? It is Molly, I'm eating.  
(to Nomi)  
It's my dad - we're having a party -

NOMI (interrupts)  
Give him to me, give me!

She grabs the phone from Molly, who laughs.

NOMI (excited)  
Mr. Abrams, this is Nomi - I got into a show! At the Stardust! And I got this big bouquet of flowers! You should see' em! They are so beautiful!

She is a very excited, bedazzled little girl sharing her excitement with her father -- but of course it is Molly's father she's talking to.

79 INT. STAGE AT STARDUST - DAY

79

It is dark. Nomi walks in. It seems there is no one else here.

NOMI  
Hello?  
(a beat)  
Anybody here?

A VOICE  
Back here.

She steps back into the shadows, into the half-light. And she sees Cristal sitting there with her legs crossed in front of her. She wears leather pants, very expensive ostrich cowboy boots, a beautifully bejeweled denim jacket, and a very fancy straw cowboy hat.

NOMI (after a beat)  
What are you doing here?

CRISTAL (after a beat)  
What am I doing here? I'm doing the finest cocaine in the world, darlin'. You want some?

Nomi looks at her a beat, shakes her head. Cristal snorts a line of coke that she has laid out with a rolled-up hundred dollar bill.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
It's great for the muscles.

She gets up. They look at each other a beat.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
I told Marty I'd work on your turns with  
you, darlin', except I feel a little  
turned inside-out today.

She smiles. Nomi looks at her evenly, doesn't smile.

NOMI (after a beat)  
Cut the shit, okay?

Cristal looks at her a beat.

CRISTAL  
Okay. We got off on the wrong foot.  
You wanna start dancing all over again?

They have their eyes on each other.

NOMI (after a beat)  
Why?

CRISTAL (after a beat)  
Why not?

They look at each other, the faces unsmiling. A long beat.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
You want to walk down to Spago and get  
something to eat?

NOMI (after a beat)  
Where is it?

She doesn't seem anxious to go anywhere with Cristal.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
Just down from Ver-sayce.

She starts to walk ahead -- Nomi goes after her.

NOMI  
Versace.

She pronounces it correctly.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
Yeah, Versace.

80 INT. SPAGO -- DAY

80

It is at Caesars Forum. They have been seated at a center table. Cristal keeps her cowboy hat on and wears wrap-around shades. She looks glamorous. Nomi sits across from her in her black leather jacket, her Harley T-shirt, and jeans -- looking relatively very scruffy.

People are staring at Cristal -- Nomi sees it. Waiters hover about excitedly. They have their menus in hand.

NOMI  
I don't know what all this stuff is.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
I'll order for you.

Nomi is wary, defensive, almost hostile.

NOMI (after a beat)  
Do they have any brown rice and vegetables?

CRISTAL (smiles)  
Do you like brown rice and vegetables?

NOMI (hesitantly)  
Yeah.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
You do?

NOMI (after a beat)  
Sort of.

She avoids Cristal's eyes.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
Really?

Nomi looks at her a long beat as she looks at her menu.

NOMI (simply)  
It's worse than dog food.

Cristal laughs. Nomi smiles, almost against her will.

NOMI  
It is.

CRISTAL  
I've had dog food.

NOMI  
You have?

Another little smile, almost against her will.

CRISTAL  
A long time ago.  
(a beat)  
I used to like it.

Nomi laughs, almost against her will.

NOMI  
I used to like it too.

They laugh.

81 INT. SPAGO - LATER

81

They are eating salads and sashimi. Cristal has a bottle of Roederer Cristal in front of her. She is pouring Nomi some.

NOMI

I get a headache from champagne.

CRISTAL

This isn't champagne. This is holy water. I named myself after this holy water. Chrissie Lou Connors used to have dingy brown hair and little tits. It's just amazing what paint and a surgeon can do.

She smiles -- she's a little high off the champagne. She raises her glass in a toast.

CRISTAL (smiles)

You've got great tits. They're really beautiful.

NOMI (after a beat)

Thank you.

They clink glasses. Cristal smiles.

CRISTAL

I like nice tits. I always have. How about you?

NOMI

(after a beat, smiles)

I like having nice tits.

A beat, and Cristal's eyes are directly on hers.

CRISTAL (quietly)

How do you like having them?

A beat, and Nomi's eyes are directly on Cristal's.

NOMI

What do you mean?

A beat, as Cristal's eyes are on her.

CRISTAL (quietly)

You know what I mean.

There is a long beat between them as they look at each other, deadpan -- and then Nomi smiles a quick knowing smile that immediately disappears.

NOMI

I like having them in a nice dress. Or in a tight top.

CRISTAL

(after a beat, smiles)  
You like to show them off.

NOMI

I didn't like showing them off at the Cheetah.

CRISTAL (smiles)

Why not? I liked looking at them there. Everybody liked looking at them there.

NOMI

It made me feel like a hooker.

A beat, and then Cristal smiles, her eyes intensely on Nomi's again.

CRISTAL

You are a whore, darlin'.

A beat; we see the hurt and anger on Nomi's face.

NOMI

No, I'm not.

CRISTAL (smiles)

We all are. We take the cash or we cash the check. We show 'em what they want to see.

NOMI (after a beat)

Maybe you're a whore, Cristal, but I'm not.

Cristal looks at her a long beat, stung. Then she starts putting money on the table.

CRISTAL (smiles)

You and me -- we're exactly alike.

NOMI (after a beat)

I'll never be like you, Cristal.

They look at each other a long beat.

As they look at each other -- THREE MEN come up to their table.

ONE OF THEM

We're sorry to disturb you, Ms. Connors. Could we ask you to sign these for us?

They have pens and pieces of paper.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
I'd be happy to, darlin'. What's your name?

THE MAN  
Frank. I'm from Galveston.

She is signing the piece of paper.

CRISTAL  
Well, I'm just a little ole farm girl from Del Rio, Frank.

THE MAN (to the others)  
Didn't I tell you she was from Texas?

She is finished with the autograph, gets up, puts the piece of paper to her lips, making an imprint of her lips on it.

THE MAN (excitedly)  
Whoo-whee. Lookit that!

Cristal leaves, Nomi follows.

ANOTHER MAN (excitedly)  
Can I have me one just like that?

CRISTAL (smiles)  
You want a girl to use up all her lipstick on you?

Cristal laughs, leans over and kisses Nomi on the cheek, leaving a lipstick smear.

CRISTAL  
Do you want to dance?

NOMI (after a beat)  
Right now?

Their eyes are on each other.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
It's now or never.

82 INT. THE STAGE - DAY

82

It is dark. Suddenly the stagelights go on. Cristal and Nomi face each other, both of them wearing high-cut Bob Fosse-style leotards. There is no one else here.

A beat, as they look at each other -- it is very quiet -- and then Cristal smiles. A long beat... and then Nomi smiles a shy, girlish smile.

Hard, thumping ROCK MUSIC from the show comes on... and Cristal starts to dance in front of Nomi.

CRISTAL

Follow me.

A beat, and Nomi starts to dance facing her. They are thrusting hips at each other, eyes on each other, their bodies almost touching.

CRISTAL

Harder.

She starts to pump harder... and then so does Nomi, their eyes on each other.

CRISTAL (quietly)

Give me more.

Facing each other, their legs are touching now... their torsos moving, bobbing, not quite touching... Cristal's head is back, her eyes closed... they are both sweating heavily... And as the music continues... Cristal suddenly stops dancing... and after a beat, so does Nomi.

They look at each other. Cristal puts her arms behind Nomi's back slowly... and lifts Nomi's arms... as the music continues.

A long beat, as Cristal holds Nomi's arms high, and then she moves her face toward her body... and kisses her armpit, very gently, very tenderly.

The song ends, the music stops. In the sudden absolute silence, they look at each other... and Cristal very gently pulls Nomi's leotard down over one breast... leans close slowly, and kisses her breast.

CRISTAL

You are a whore, darlin' -- I told  
you --

Nomi freezes. Slowly she moves a step backwards, detaching her breast from Cristal's lips.

NOMI (soft)

Bitch --

Cristal straightens up, smiles. She touches Nomi again, Nomi slaps her hand away, turns and walks away.

CRISTAL (sweet)

Are we done -- ?

She picks up her sweater.

NOMI (sharp)

I am done.

CRISTAL

Isn't that a pity. I could've helped  
you.

NOMI

Yeah... right.

Cristal follows her, shutting off the stage lights. It gets pretty dark, as they walk towards the staircase.

They go down the steep staircase towards the dressing rooms. Cristal is a couple of steps behind Nomi. The sound of their steps resonates sharply on the steel of the staircase.

CRISTAL

You know the best advice I ever got?  
You're up there onstage, hopin' on a  
spot. If people get in your way, step  
on 'em. If you're the only one left  
standin' up there, they hire you.  
That's about it. Thank you and  
goodnight, ladies and gentlemen. Elvis  
has left the building.

She laughs and disappears in her dressing room. Nomi stands there for a moment then walks away.

83 INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

83

They are in between numbers, changing their costumes. At the dressing table next to Nomi, Phil Newkirk, the public relations guy, is talking to Nicky. We can't hear what they're saying.

Down the row of tables, Julie is getting ready with her two little kids next to her -- a LITTLE BOY and a LITTLE GIRL, about four and six years old. The kids see a cage with the monkeys being pushed through the corridor.

LITTLE GIRL

Mommy, can we see the monkeys?

Julie is looking at herself in the mirror, putting makeup on.

JULIE

They're busy now, honey.

LITTLE BOY

I want to see the monkeys, Mommy.

He says it in a loud voice.

LITTLE GIRL

What are they doing, Mommy?

At the next table, Annie is getting annoyed with the kids. The little girl has taken her lipstick - Annie angrily grabs it back.

LITTLE BOY

I want to see the monkeys! I want to  
see the monkeys!

LITTLE GIRL

Why can't we see the monkeys? Why can't we --

ANNIE (suddenly, loud)

Will you get these fucking kids out of here?

LITTLE GIRL (to Annie)

You said the F-word! She said the F-word!

ANNIE

(very hard, very loud)

Shut the fuck up!

And the Little Girl starts to cry very loudly as Julie puts her arms around her and holds her. As she holds her, she stares at Annie like she's going to kill her.

Phil Newkirk comes over to Nomi's dressing table. We see Molly working on Sonny's costumes on the other side of Nomi.

PHIL

There's a Jaguar convention coming in next week. They need two girls. Nicky's gonna do it. You interested? It's a thousand dollars.

NOMI (astounded)

A thousand dollars?

(a beat)

To do what?

PHIL

To represent your hotel for a day. You wear your costumes and your smile. They take your picture.

NOMI (laughs)

A thousand dollars!? Yeah! Thanks.

PHIL (grins)

Cristal here recommended you.

Cristal is suddenly there, on her way out of the dressing room. Nomi turns to her.

NOMI (a little wearily)

Thanks.

CRISTAL (smiles)

My pleasure, darlin', you'll do my nails sometime.

She keeps going. Nomi smiles. Phil follows Cristal.

PHIL (after a beat)  
We've got to talk about that magazine  
lay-out.

The girls start leaving the room, for the next number. Molly holds Nomi back.

MOLLY  
Don't do it.

Nomi looks at her a beat.

NOMI  
What? A thousand -- why not?

CRISTAL  
(from her dressing room)  
Molly! I need you!

Molly hangs up the costume she is holding and hesitates for a moment before she moves away.

MOLLY  
I know some of the other girls who've  
done it. They... they didn't like it.

But her words are drowned out by Cristal who appears half-naked in the doorway.

CRISTAL  
Molly-- I'm waiting!

Molly rushes away as Nomi starts going toward the stairs.

NOMI (to Nicky)  
Did you do it before?

NICKY (after a beat)  
Yeah.

NOMI  
Did you like it?

Nicky doesn't look at her, looks at herself in the mirror.

NICKY  
Did I like it?  
(a beat; flat)  
Sure, I liked it.

84 INT. CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

84

We see dozens of Jaguars displayed around the showroom. It is a Jaguar car dealers' convention. There are hundreds of people. We see Nomi and Nicky, wearing their costumes from the show. They wear tops, too, but they are so skimpy they may as well be topless.

85 A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS

85

- 1) Nomi and Nicky, with two corporate types standing against a Jaguar, arm in arm. Their picture is being taken.
- 2) Nomi lying across the hood of a Jaguar, striking poses, looking very sexy, as men crowd around the car to take her picture.
- 3) Nomi and Nicky with a bunch of other girls from other shows in other costumes, smiling for a group portrait.
- 4) Nomi and Nicky, standing at a booth, signing "Goddess" programs for a line of men, smiling.

86 INT. CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

86

Nomi and Nicky stand at the booth. There is no one there.

NICKY  
I'm gonna get crippled.

She shakes her right hand -- she is in pain. She sees Phil Newkirk heading toward the booth with an ASIAN MAN in his 60's.

NICKY (to Nomi)  
Oh, shit, here it comes.

She says it afraid and angry.

PHIL (big smile)  
Hey, guys, how's it goin'?

He and the Asian Man smile.

NICKY (big smile)  
Just fine.

PHIL (to Nomi)  
Tough gig, huh?

NOMI (smiles)  
Very tough.

PHIL  
This is my friend, Mr. Okida. He's from Bangkok.

The man bows. He has a silly grin on his face.

PHIL  
He's one of our very, very high rollers.

Nomi and Nicky smile at him.

PHIL

We thought we'd take you guys out to dinner tonight after the show.

(to Okida)

We can have some lobster, hear Caesar sing.

(to Nomi)

You ever heard Caesar sing? That guy's great. You'll love him.

MR. OKIDA (laughs)

Caesar sing!

PHIL (laughs)

Yeah, Caesar'll sing and then we'll go back to my place and we'll sing -- just the four of us. How about it?

MR. OKIDA (laughs)

We sing.

He leers at the girls.

PHIL (laughs)

Yeah, we'll sing a lotta songs.

NICKY

(after a beat, shyly)

Okay.

She doesn't look at them, keeps her eyes down.

PHIL (smiles)

Okay. Good deal.

MR. OKIDA (smiles)

Oh-kay! Goo deal!

He laughs, leers.

NOMI (suddenly)

Not me.

A beat, as Okida and Phil look at her -- Nicky keeps her eyes down. Nomi starts to walk away. Phil comes after her, grabs her arm.

PHIL (smiles)

Be nice.

NOMI (hard)

Get your hands off me!

Some people are glancing at them. In the b.g., we see Okida watching them, laughing.

PHIL (hard, low)

Listen, you're getting a thousand dollars for this --

NOMI (hard, loud)  
 For this!  
                   (a beat)  
This!

She indicates the show. Phil sees how angry she is, sees people looking at them.

PHIL (smiles)  
 Forget it.  
                   (he thickens his smile)  
 Forget it, okay? No harm done. No damage.

And he turns and walks back to Nicky and Okida.

87 INT. DRESSING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

87

She walks in. She looks very angry, very upset. She is wearing her black leather jacket, her Harley T-shirt, her jeans. She sees Cristal talking to Zack in the dressing room. She looks at them a beat, then walks up to them.

NOMI (to Zack)  
 Can I talk to you?

ZACK (after a beat)  
 Sure.

He sees how upset she is; so does Cristal.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
 Did you have a nice day, darlin'?

NOMI (hard)  
 No.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
 I'm sorry to hear that.

88 INT. BACKSTAGE - THE PROP ROOM - LATER

88

It is dark. It is a huge, cavernous room. We see all kinds of props in the b.g. She and Zack are alone.

Zack looks at her a long beat. He looks upset, but he is cool, all inheld.

ZACK  
 Jesus.  
                   (a beat)  
 I'm sorry.  
                   (a beat)  
 Some people just don't get it.

She stands there, looks at him. He takes a portable telephone off his belt, dials.

ZACK (cool)  
Get Phil Newkirk down here in the prop  
room right away.

He shuts his phone off. Nomi looks at him a long beat.

NOMI  
Thank you.

She turns to go.

ZACK  
I want you to stay.

His phone BUZZES. He picks it up.

ZACK (on phone)  
Yeah.  
(a beat)  
The drop is up 33 percent in those  
fifty-eight machines. The bottom line  
will be around 250.  
(a beat)  
Okay.

He shuts the phone off, looks at her and smiles.

ZACK  
I got an MBA for this. That's what this  
business has come to. Cost-analyzing  
each damn slot machine.

She looks at him as he smiles... and then smiles with him.

NOMI  
What's an MBA?

PHIL (O.S.)  
Zack, you in here?

He steps around some props, sees Zack standing there with Nomi.  
He gives Nomi a look.

ZACK (directly)  
If I ever here anything like this again,  
you're out of here.

He says it with great intensity, but there is a calmness over  
it, a basic cool.

PHIL  
Zack, listen, nothin' happened --

ZACK (intensely)  
Yeah, somethin' happened.

Nomi watches him.

PHIL  
She jumped to conclusions, Zack --

ZACK (intensely)  
-- And if it happens again -- to  
anybody -- you're going to jump to  
your conclusion.  
(a beat)  
Without your golden parachute.

He and Phil look at each other a beat.

ZACK  
You owe her an apology.

Phil looks at him a beat, then turns to her.

PHIL  
I'm sorry.

He looks like he means it.

ZACK  
Get out of here.

And Phil goes. She stands there a long beat, looking at him.

ZACK  
An MBA is a degree you pick up in  
college. It's mostly worthless in the  
real world.

She looks at him a long beat.

NOMI  
You go for it, don't you?

ZACK (after a beat)  
I try to.

Their eyes are on each other. A bell rings.

NOMI (quietly)  
Showtime.

ZACK (smiles)  
That's for sure.

He watches her as she goes out. When she's gone, he picks the  
phone up again and dials.

ZACK (on the phone)  
Phil, you dumb schmuck, get back down  
here, willya?

He grins.

89 INT. DRESSING ROOM.

89

She goes back in, sees the door to Cristal's dressing room open, steps to it. Cristal is shaving her legs.

NOMI

I'm glad you're lookin' out for me,  
Cristal. It was nice of you to  
recommend me to Phil.

Cristal shaves her leg, then looks up.

CRISTAL

What are friends for?

She smiles.

90 INT. STAIRWAY TO THE STAGE - NIGHT

90

Nomi with Annie, Julie, Nicky, Sonny, Felix and Daryl in the half-dark, waiting to go up. Molly, a flashlight in her mouth, is sewing something on Annie's costume.

Sal, passing Annie, puts his hand on her crotch. She tries to hit him, but misses.

ANNIE

You do that again, Sal, I'll break your  
fucking fingers.

SAL

Hey, I can't help it if you don't have a  
gay partner.

FELIX (who is gay)

Oooh! He's not gay! He's so hetero.  
He wants everybody to see how hetero  
he is.

DARYL (also gay)

Bring that flashlight over here, Molly.  
I want to see how big he is.

SAL

(to Felix and Daryl)  
You want a knuckle sandwich?

FELIX

Can I have mine anally, please?

Sal threatens to hit him. We see Sonny tooting up again.

NOMI (to men)

Can't you guys just stop it? Jesus.

She has ice on her nipples. Annie sees Julie staring at her.

ANNIE (to Julie)  
What are you looking at?

Julie doesn't say anything, just stares at her.

91 INT. STAGE

91

They are doing a number we haven't seen onscreen before. It concludes with some of the girls being picked up and held on the guys' shoulders. Cristal is the focus of attention.

From NOMI'S POV, we see Julie's hand as she is dancing. We see her drop four rhinestones on the stage... right in the path of Daryl, who has Annie on his shoulders as he dances.

But his back is to Julie. He doesn't see the rhinestones on the floor.

Nomi is dancing alone, farther from Daryl and Annie. She sees them get closer to the rhinestones on the floor... but she can't do anything about it.

Daryl, with Annie atop him, dances closer to the rhinestones. We see his boot getting closer... and closer... and then his boot is atop two of the rhinestones and he turns... loses his balance...we see it almost in SLOW MOTION... and he falls, with Annie atop him. They both go down on the floor of the stage -- it is cement underneath the wood -- very hard.

92 INT. STAGE WINGS - NIGHT

92

Annie and Daryl are on the floor, with people all around them. Annie and Daryl are in great pain. Annie is crying.

DAWN (looking at Annie)  
It's her right knee.

ANNIE (crying)  
It isn't broken, is it?

GAY (to Daryl)  
What happened?

DARYL (in pain)  
My foot went out from under me.

Felix is holding his hand. A STAGEHAND comes up to them.

STAGEHAND  
This is what happened.

He holds three rhinestones in his hand.

JULIE  
I wonder how those got up there.

Nomi looks at her, so do the others.

FELIX

They probably came off a costume.

Julie looks at Annie crying.

JULIE

Jesus. Poor Annie.

(she smiles)

Tough break.

And she leaves -- Nomi and the others look at her.

93 INT. CORRIDOR TOWARDS DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

93

Nomi heads quickly through the corridor, which is filled with medical and show people. It is loud there. The door to Cristal's room is open as she passes. We hear and see snatches of the following dialogue:

TONY

It's my fucking decision, I'll make it!

ZACK

You'll decide, but with my blessing!

TONY

I'm the producer! It's my show!

ZACK

And I hired your show! You're my producer!

CRISTAL

She was my understudy -- I want a voice in this.

We are not sure how much of this muffled, heated conversation Nomi has heard.

94 INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

94

Nomi and some other girls walk in. Dawn is at Annie's table, putting her personal things in a plastic bag. Julie is already sitting.

DAWN

She broke it.

NICKY

Shit, that's at least three months.

JULIE

Bad karma, huh?

She smiles a very assured, hard smile. Nomi looks away from her, back into the mirror. She sees Julie's little girl jumping on Annie's chair and picking up Annie's lipstick.

Gay sticks her head around the corner.

GAY

Nomi? Your mother's waiting for you.

Nomi turns to her, badly startled. We see fear on her face.

NOMI

My mother?

GAY

But for your sake, I hope she's not.

95 INT. BACKSTAGE/STAGE - NIGHT

95

We see a CLOSEUP of Henrietta Bazoom's fat, sweating face as she stands on the darkened, empty stage in her low-cut evening gown.

As soon as she sees Nomi, we hear the guttural voice from hell.

HENRIETTA (in a flurry)

If a light sleeper can sleep with a light on, can a hard sleeper sleep with a hard on? What's a tiger? A tiger's a big pussy that eats people. What's a lion? A lion is --

NOMI

Henry!

She runs to her, hugs this big woman, kisses her cheek.

HENRIETTA (embarrassed)

I can get shit on, but I don't like gettin' spit on.

They laugh.

A VOICE (behind her)

Hi!

Al Torres, the manager of the Cheetah, walks up to her. He is dressed up in his nicest suit.

NOMI (a little cool)

Hi, Al.

They shake hands, a bit formal.

AL (mock serious)

You look like shit.

HENRIETTA

She looks better than a ten-inch dick  
and you know it.

They smile. A beat.

AL (to Nomi)

So -- you like it here?

HENRIETTA (growls)

What'd you think -- she was gonna miss  
you?

AL

(after a beat, to Nomi)

Yeah, well, we miss you.

HENRIETTA

She misses us like that lump on my twat  
I had taken off last week.

Nomi laughs a little. Al shakes his head.

AL

Jesus, Henry.

He doesn't know what to say. And suddenly, Henrietta moves her  
elbow and her breasts pop out, then back in, out again, then  
back in. Henrietta theatrically rolls her eyes.

AL (with difficulty)

We saw the show. You're good.

NOMI (after a beat)

Thanks, Al.

She looks at him, touched. He avoids her eyes.

AL

Real good.

He still looks down, doesn't look at her. A long beat, they  
don't know what to say.

AL

Well, you take care, kid.

He gives her a fast brush on the cheek. Nomi goes to Henry and  
hugs her.

NOMI

Bye, Henry.

Al smiles, waves at Nomi and, taking Henrietta's hand, they  
slowly make their way waddling across the big stage. Al turns  
back a second, still holding her hand.

AL  
 Hey, Nome, it must be weird not havin'  
 anybody come on you.

He laughs and they go out the back door. She stares after them  
 a long beat in the semi-darkness, lost in her thoughts.

ZACK (behind her)  
 Can I give you a ride?

She looks at him, distracted, still lost in her thoughts.

NOMI (after a beat)  
 I've got one.

ZACK (smiles)  
 Okay. Goodnight.

And he starts to walk across the stage. She watches him,  
 then -- suddenly:

NOMI  
 Wait.

A beat, and then he turns and looks at her.

96 INT. HIS FERRARI - NIGHT

96

As he drives; she sits next to him.

ZACK  
 Have you ever been in one of these?

She shakes her head, looks straight ahead. They are in the  
 Beltway around Vegas. The neon city glows in the darkness a  
 distance away from them.

ZACK (smiles)  
 I've always wanted one.  
 (a beat; then boyishly)  
 It's some car, isn't it?

He races it a little. She looks at him

NOMI  
 It doesn't suck.

He looks at her, smiles, then looks away. She is still looking  
 at him.

ZACK  
 Where am I going? You'll have to give  
 me directions.

NOMI  
 To your place.

He looks at her, very surprised. She is looking right at him, her face expressionless. And then she smiles a little bit.

97 INT. ZACK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

97

It is very expensive, done in a faultless southwestern motif. He is in the kitchen, opening a bottle of champagne.

She is walking around the living room, looking at framed photographs of Zack with high profile entertainers like Elvis, Sinatra, Wayne Newton. Prominently: Zack with Cristal and with Andrew Carver.

Outside the living room, beyond the big sliding glass doors, we see a beautifully-lighted swimming pool with a fountain arching over it, the fountain spraying directly into the pool.

He comes out of the kitchen with a bottle of Cristal and glasses on a silver tray. He puts the tray down. She watches him.

NOMI

You like Cristal?

He looks at her a beat. Is she talking about the champagne or about Cristal Connors?

ZACK (smiles)

I like a lot of different champagnes.

(he looks at her)

But I always stick to champagne.

He pours her champagne. He gives her a glass.

NOMI

So what's Andrew Carver like?

ZACK

Are you nervous? Don't be.

He looks at her directly. She holds his eyes a beat.

NOMI (quietly)

I'm not. I liked it when you came. I liked your eyes.

A long beat as he looks at her, taken aback, and she casually walks out the sliding glass doors to the swimming pool. She starts to take her clothes off, her back to him. He watches her body. She jumps into the pool.

98 EXT. POOL - NIGHT

98

She is up against the side of the pool, naked. Her arms are on the side of the pool. Her head is back. Her eyes are closed. The water from the fountain is hitting the pool water a few feet in front of her.

We hear a SPLASH of water -- as we HOLD on her face, tilted against the night sky, her eyes closed... and then she moves her head to the side and back... to the side and back again... as his head is between her legs under the water. She wraps her legs around his head... as he comes up from under the water... and puts his mouth on her breast... holding her head back by her hair... pulling her onto him by her butt with the other hand... and then he kisses her, hard... pulls her farther away from the side into the water... the spray from the fountain is hitting her face now... as his hands part her legs... wider... she moans as he is inside her... her head back... the spray hitting her face, her head tilted back.

99 EXT. POOL - NIGHT

99

She is against the side of the pool... her face is turned away from him now. His hand is inside her mouth... her mouth open... He holds her by the mouth... her head is back... his other hand is inside the cleft of her butt... as he is inside her... under the water. She moves against him, up and down, up and down... back and forth... bump and grind... the lap dancer's movement... as he pulls her backwards... turning her head roughly... she starts to moan... the water from the fountain hits her in the face... as she comes... and tries to breathe.

100 INT. HIS BEDROOM - DAWN

100

She is sitting on the side of the bed, getting dressed. It is getting light outside. He is asleep, wakes up, sees her dressing. He moves to hold her -- she moves away from him.

ZACK

Stay with me. I'll drive you back in the morning.

NOMI

(after a beat, smiling)

It is morning.

She is putting clothes on, doesn't look at him.

ZACK (sweetly)

Please?

She looks at him.

NOMI

I've got a taxi coming.

ZACK

You could send it back.

A beat, and she turns away from him again and shakes her head. She stands up to finish dressing. He watches her.

ZACK

Cristal needs a new understudy. There's an audition at noon. Do you want to try?

She looks at him a beat, then looks away from him, out the window.

NOMI

Would you have told me about it if I wouldn't have come over here?

ZACK

It wasn't my idea to come here. It was yours.

She turns and looks at him, her face expressionless. We hear the TAXI HONKING outside.

ZACK

I'd like to see you again.

NOMI (after a beat)

See ya.

And she heads out.

101 EXT. TRAILER - EARLY MORNING 101

The sun is coming up as she comes from the cab to the front porch and then in the door.

102 INT. TRAILER 102

Molly is asleep on the couch. She wakes up. Nomi stands there, smiling at her.

MOLLY

(turns back to pillow)

I hate you.

Nomi laughs.

MOLLY

Who was he?

NOMI (smiles)

Zack.

MOLLY (smiles)

Did you tie him up?

She takes her head out of the pillow, looks at her.

NOMI (upset)

Oh, shit.

MOLLY  
What's the matter?

NOMI (deadpan)  
I forgot to untie him.

They laugh together. Nomi wanders into the kitchen.

MOLLY  
You high?

NOMI  
Maybe a little.

She wanders into the kitchen.

NOMI  
I can't go to sleep now. I've got an  
audition at noon. Have we got any  
Sugar-Snaps?

Molly watches her.

MOLLY  
They're in the cupboard.

Nomi opens some cabinets.

MOLLY  
(quietly, watching her)  
Don't get sucked into it, Nomi.

Nomi looks at her a beat seriously, then --

NOMI  
Uh-oh. Look what I found!

She grins like a little girl, stuffing chips into her mouth, as Molly watches her seriously.

103 INT. THE SHOWROOM - DAY

103

Nomi is dancing alongside Nicky, Sonny, and Julie. They are doing one of Cristal's edgy, HARD-ROCK, sensuous numbers. They are wearing the high-cut Bob Fosse leotards. Nomi wears a black headband that dangles down to the middle of her back. They bump and grind and move and slide to the climax, and the MUSIC STOPS. They stand there up onstage.

In the showroom, watching them, are Tony Moss, Marty Jacobsen, Zack, Cristal, and Dawn. Watching from another area is Phil Newkirk. A long beat, after the music stops, and then --

TONY  
Nicky.

ZACK  
 (after a beat, casually)  
 She isn't hot enough, Tone.

TONY  
 She's got it down.

ZACK  
 You can teach 'em to get it down. She  
 doesn't have Cristal's heat.

DAWN  
 None of them have Cristal's heat.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
 I do love you, Dawn.

There are some laughs.

ZACK  
 Nomi does.

A beat, as they look at him.

CRISTAL (to Zack, ice cold)  
 Does she now?

MARTY  
 Yes she does.

Cristal glares at him.

MARTY (looking away)  
 In a different way, of course.

Zack smiles to himself a little bit.

TONY (angry)  
She's going to take the lead? This is  
 a hotel show. This isn't the  
Cheetah!

CRISTAL (smiles, to Tony)  
 No one's going to take my lead anyway,  
 darlin'. I haven't missed a show  
 wherever I've been in eight years.

TONY  
 You're not getting any younger,  
darlin'.

CRISTAL (casually)  
 Fuck you.

A beat, as they look at each other.

MARTY  
 You want to do it again with just Nomi?

TONY  
No.

ZACK  
Yes.

Zack walks away, signals Phil to follow him. In the background we hear Marty tell Nomi to stay, the others to leave.

ZACK (to Phil)  
What do we know about her?

PHIL  
Nothing. I'm not even sure she gave us the right social security number.

ZACK  
Find out.

PHIL  
What?

ZACK  
Everything.

Phil gives him a look and drifts away, the other girls have left the stage. And as the music starts again, Nomi dances alone. She turns directly to Zack, her eyes on his, and dances for him, her body turned that way. He keeps staring at her.

Cristal comes up to him. She watches Nomi, too.

CRISTAL  
You fucked her, didn't you?

Zack never takes his eyes off Nomi.

ZACK  
Does that piss you off because you're jealous, Cris?

And now he looks at Cristal.

ZACK  
Or because I beat you to the punch?

CRISTAL (after a beat)  
You're such a bastard.

ZACK  
(after a beat, smiles)  
But you love me.

104 INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY.

104

Nomi is at the water fountain, just slurping water up.

CRISTAL  
 (quietly, behind her)  
 Did you fuck him for the spot or did you  
 fuck him because you wanted to?

She stops drinking the water, looks up at her.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
 I say you did it for the spot.

A beat, then --

NOMI  
 Is that what you did, Cristal?

They look at each other a beat.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
 You don't want to piss me off, darlin',  
 now that we're friends.

NOMI (after a beat)  
 You shouldn't get pissed off, Cristal.  
 It makes you look older.

Cristal looks at her like she could kill her, then abruptly  
 walks away.

Nomi drinks some more water -- and then starts heading for the  
 dressing room. Zack comes up to her on the way there.

ZACK (smiles)  
 You got it.

She looks at him, excited.

NOMI (smiles)  
I do?

ZACK (laughs)  
 Marty and Dawn will work with you. I'll  
 let Phil know -- we'll get some glossies  
 taken.  
 (he smiles)  
 You did good.

NOMI (smiles)  
 Thanks.

ZACK (after a beat)  
 I'll call you for dinner. Let's have  
 some lobster.  
 (he smiles)  
 Did you ever hear Caesar sing? You'll  
 love it.

A beat, she looks at him with a suddenly dead smile and heads  
 into the dressing room.

105 INT. THE DRESSING ROOM

105

She walks in.

As soon as she does, she sees Sonny and Nicky glaring at her. Julie seems not to notice her. Nomi stops, looks at them.

NOMI (after a beat)

What?

A beat, and they turn away from her. Nomi sits down. Gay passes through the room.

GAY (ice cold)

Congratulations. I hear you earned it.

Julie gets up, ready to leave.

JULIE

She did.

As she passes Nomi she puts a hand on Nomi's shoulder, casually.

Nomi looks at her in the mirror. Then she sees the flyer tucked into the side of the mirror. She takes it out. It is a stylized sketch of a lap dancer sitting across a man's lap. In big letters, we see -- "Private Dance by James Smith." Underneath, it says: "The Shark Club, Saturday."

She puts the flyer down. She looks at herself a long beat in the mirror. It is almost as if she is ashamed to look at herself.

A beat, and then she turns and goes to the door of Cristal's dressing room. She opens the door without knocking.

106 INT. CRISTAL'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

106

Cristal, in a kimono, is sitting on the couch, doing her nails. They look at each other a beat. Nomi closes the door behind her.

NOMI

I didn't even know about the audition... until afterwards.

Cristal looks up at her and smiles.

CRISTAL

You like my nails?

She holds them out, looks at them.

CRISTAL

They're not as nice as yours.

She takes Nomi's hand in hers, compares the patterns on their nails, then intertwines her fingers with Nomi's. Looks at her --

NOMI (a long beat)  
I'll help you with yours sometime.

She stands there as if she's waiting. They look at each other. And slowly Cristal pulls Nomi towards her. And very slowly she moves their interwoven hands to her breast.

CRISTAL (smiles)  
Isn't that nice of you, darlin'?

Nomi's hand now rests on her breast. Cristal holds her breath, her eyes on Nomi. Now Nomi moves her fingers, pushing Cristal's dress aside, exposing her breast.

NOMI  
What are friends for?

Her fingers touch Cristal's nipple... squeeze it. Cristal blinks. Her other hand is on Nomi's leg, moving up her thigh.

Suddenly her hand slips inside Nomi's leotard. Nomi inhales sharply, their eyes on each other. She wants to move backwards, but Cristal holds her.

CRISTAL  
Don't --

Her hand moves underneath the leotard. Nomi throws her head backwards.

CRISTAL  
Let go -- let go --

She looks up to Nomi, her cheek pressed against Nomi's belly. Nomi starts to breathe very fast.

CRISTAL  
Nomi --

But she has a strange smile on her face.

107 EXT. THE STRIP - DAY

107

Nomi is walking out. She wears a black leather jacket and jeans. She looks upset. She sees Molly getting out of her car, carrying some costumes.

NOMI (directly)  
Can I borrow the car?

MOLLY (smiles)  
Sure.

She tosses her the keys. Nomi takes the keys and heads directly for the car. Molly looks after her.

MOLLY  
What's the matter?

NOMI  
Nothin'.

Nomi starts the car up.

MOLLY  
Where you goin'?

Nomi roars away -- Molly stands there looking after her, concerned.

108 INT. THE TOYOTA - SUNSET

108

She sits in the Toyota, which is parked on the top floor of a high-rise parking lot. She faces the setting sun. She is chewing a Mega-Mac. She has french fries and a Coke on the dash. She stops chewing, then swallows what's in her mouth slowly. A beat, and she puts her head back against the headrest and closes her eyes.

109 INT. THE SHARK CLUB - NIGHT

109

Nomi makes her way through hundreds of people, jammed together on the dance floor. Up onstage, we see James with Penny and two other girls -- one of them we've seen at Nomi's first audition.

Nomi watches James as he dances on the small stage with the others. They are doing his number, "Private Dance". It is stylized and crudely ballet-like. Ear-splitting, bombarding RAP is their accompaniment. They do a lot of thrusts and splits. At one point, Penny lap-dances James, whose feet dance while he's sitting on a chair, pretending to climax.

The crowd here hates what they're watching. There are calls of "Get off the stage!" and "Change the music!"

James is disturbed, seemingly, by none of it. There is a classic spare, elemental power to his dancing. Nomi watches him.

As they finish, there is some applause, but lots of BOOS. The instant they finish -- wild, high-screech industrial RAVE blasts on the speakers and the strobe lights start swirling as the mob starts to dance. Nomi makes her way to the back of the stage -- James jumps off, sees her. They talk above the blare and babel of the MUSIC and the crowd NOISE. He still wears his mime-face.

NOMI  
I loved it -- it was really neat.

JAMES (grins)  
What you doin' here -- slummin'?

They have to talk loudly; they have difficulty hearing each other. Penny is suddenly there.

PENNY (big smile)  
Heather!

NOMI (smiles)  
Hey, Hope!

They give each other the high-five.

PENNY (excited)  
Were we good?

NOMI  
You were great!

They give each other the high-five again.

JAMES (grins)  
She dances like a truck!

PENNY  
(slugs him in the stomach)  
I do not.  
(to James)  
You want somethin' to drink?

JAMES (grins)  
Git me a beer, bitch.

PENNY (to Nomi)  
Look what I got.

She shows off a diamond ring. Nomi glances at James a beat, then --

NOMI (to Penny)  
It's beautiful!

JAMES (grins)  
I got it at Sears.

PENNY  
You did not. You got it at a pawnshop.

And she goes off into the crowd. James and Nomi look at each other a beat -- he draws her closer to a wall so they can hear each other better.

JAMES (grins)  
We're gettin' married.

NOMI (after a beat)  
You love her?

JAMES (grins)  
I don't know. She's havin' a baby.

She looks at him a beat, sadness in her eyes. He looks away from her.

NOMI  
What about -- this?

She indicates the dancing.

JAMES (grins)  
We ain't any good. You hear 'em out there? "Get off the stage! Get out!"

NOMI (after a beat)  
What are you gonna do?

JAMES (after a beat)  
Work at a grocery store.

He looks away from her.

JAMES  
Her mama owns it.  
(he grins)  
Get a discount on baby food.

She looks at him a long beat, sadness in her eyes. Suddenly she gives him a kiss.

NOMI  
See ya.

She walks away.

JAMES (after her)  
Shit happens, you know. Life sucks.  
I'm a student of T-shirts.

110 INT. THE DRESSING ROOM - NEXT NIGHT

110

She walks to her table. Nicky is sitting at the next table.

NOMI  
Hi, Nicky.

Nicky says nothing, ignores her. She glances at Nicky, then sees a white envelope on her table, it has the letterhead of the Stardust. She looks at it a beat, and then she opens it. She stares. We don't see what it says.

Nomi glances up from the envelope, sees Cristal in the mirror, looking at her from her dressing room.

111 INT. ZACK'S OFFICE - STARDUST - NIGHT 111

She storms into the office, the letter in her hand, heads directly for the inner office.

THE RECEPTIONIST  
You can't go in there!

She just keeps going.

112 INT. ZACK'S INNER OFFICE - NIGHT 112

She swings the door open. He is on the phone. His office is done in the same Southwestern style that his house is done in -- we see Penas and Cormans on the walls.

ZACK (on the phone)  
Come back to me with the numbers by tomorrow.

He hangs up.

ZACK (smiles)  
What's goin' on?

NOMI (hard)  
What the fuck do you mean what's goin' on?

ZACK  
Cool it, okay?

He gets out of his chair, comes to her.

NOMI  
Cool it? You tell me I've got it and then you send me this?

She waves the letter. He tries to hold her. She breaks away from him.

ZACK  
I don't have a choice, okay? She threatened to walk. She got her lawyers into it.

NOMI (hard)  
So what!

ZACK (intensely)  
So she's a big star!  
(a beat)  
You're not worth it.

Nomi looks at him a long beat.

NOMI (quietly)  
So I don't get the spot.

ZACK (quietly)  
So you don't get the spot. She'll pick  
her own understudy.

NOMI (quietly)  
It's not fair.

ZACK (after a beat)  
It's not about fair. It's about power.  
She's got the power.

A beat, and she starts to head out. She looks destroyed.

ZACK  
I'm sorry, Nomi. I tried.

And she's gone.

113 INT. THE DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

113

She walks back in. She looks crushed. Cristal is sitting in Nomi's chair at Nomi's dressing table, some of the dancers are around her. They are laughing about something funny that Cristal just said. As Nomi enters, they all fall silent. Nomi goes up to Cristal slowly, looks at her. A beat, and then --

CRISTAL (brightly)  
I thought about it, darlin'.  
(she smiles)  
You think you can do my nails now?

Nomi stares at her, unable to speak.

CRISTAL (after a beat)  
Okay. Maybe some other time.

And she gets up and heads back to her dressing room. Nomi stares after her. Some girls laugh.

114 INT. THE STAGE - NIGHT

114

Onstage, during the show -- Nomi dancing with Sal, Sonny, Nicky, Felix, Julie, Daryl. She tries to smile, but it is a forced, frozen smile.

AN ANNOUNCER (over music)  
Ladies and gentlemen, Miss Cristal  
Connors!

And Cristal comes dancing out to the front of the stage to huge APPLAUSE, as Nomi and the others dance behind her. For a few moments, Nomi is right behind her, so that it appears the two of them are dancing together.

And then, suddenly, Cristal turns onstage, her back to the audience, facing Nomi as they dance. They are thrusting hips at each other, their bodies possessed, all sinew and glands, out of control. Their eyes are on each other, their smiles gone. They are almost head to head, almost touching. It's a fight... and it's sex.

115 INT. THE STAGE - LATER 115

as they dance off and head, running, for the stairs.

116 INT. THE STAIRWAY 116

as they go charging at a breakneck pace to change costumes for the next number. They head down the stairs in this order: first Sal, then Julie, Nicky, Felix, Sonny, Daryl, Cristal, and Nomi last.

Three or four stairs from the top, in CLOSEUP, we see Nomi's hands. She pushes the small of Cristal's back.

Cristal screams, falls. Sonny, two in front of Cristal, screams as well. It all happens very fast.

Cristal falls down the rest of the stairs to the bottom.

The others, including Nomi, are at the bottom of the stairs, surrounding her. We see Molly off to the side of the stairs, to the left. She stares.

Gay comes running up to them, sees Cristal at the bottom of the stairs in the half-dark, moaning, her eyes closed.

GAY

Oh, my God.

Marty is there suddenly.

MARTY (frantic)

What the hell happened?

SAL

I don't know.

MARTY (yelling)

Get an ambulance! Now!

Dawn is there suddenly.

DAWN (leaning down)

Cristal, can you hear me?

Cristal moans; her eyes are closed.

GAY (upset)

Who was behind her?

NOMI (after a beat)

I was.

Molly watches her.

GAY (hard)

What happened?

NOMI (after a beat)

I don't know. She just... went down.

Molly looks at her, her face expressionless. Gay glares at Nomi a long beat. Then Marty turns to her and looks at her.

JULIE (suddenly)

She slipped. I saw it.

(a beat)

Nomi wasn't even close to her.

They look at Julie a beat -- Gay and Dawn don't look convinced. Gay looks at Nomi again -- Molly keeps looking at Nomi.

Cristal moans, her eyes closed.

MARTY (yelling)

Did somebody call the fucking ambulance?

117 INT. THE BACKSTAGE DOOR - THE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

117

As paramedics take Cristal on a stretcher to the ambulance, Nomi stands with a group of others, staring, watching. Julie is on one side of her, Molly on the other.

As they put Cristal into the ambulance and close the door:

JULIE (to Nomi)

Tough break, huh?

Nomi looks at her a beat and Julie goes back inside.

Nomi notices Molly staring at her.

NOMI

What's the matter?

MOLLY (after a beat)

Nothing.

And Molly goes back inside.

Nomi stares as the ambulance's SIREN goes on and it's red light starts spinning as it heads out of the parking lot.

118 INT. CRISTAL'S DRESSING ROOM - STARDUST - NIGHT

118

There is an air of crisis in the room. Mr. Karlman paces back and forth. With them are Zack, Tony Moss, Marty Jacobsen, and Phil Newkirk.

Zack is on his portable phone.

ZACK  
Thanks. Keep me informed.

He shuts it off, puts it down on the table.

ZACK  
She's got a concussion -- that'll be okay. But she's got a compound fracture of the right hip.

MARTY  
Christ!

TONY  
Do you know how long those take to heal?  
(a long beat)  
We've got to shut the show down.

MR. KARLMAN  
Not a chance. The show goes on. The Stardust is never dark. It has never been. It never will be. Not while I'm alive.  
(a beat)  
Who was her understudy?

Tony looks at him, grins suddenly, shakes his head.

MR. KARLMAN  
What's funny?

Tony glances at Zack -- then, after a beat.

TONY  
Cristal Connors is a star. You can't just replace her.

A long beat.

PHIL  
What if we could bring somebody in while she's recuperating?

TONY  
She could be out for a year.

ZACK (after a beat)  
Like who?

PHIL  
Janet Jackson, Paula Abdul --

TONY  
Paula Abdul?

MARTY  
 Jesus.

TONY  
 In my show?

A long beat.

MR. KARLMAN  
 We're not going to pay those kind of  
 salaries.

A long beat, as they sit there, stumped, and then they see Zack smiling. They look at him.

MR. KARLMAN  
 Zachary, talk to me.

ZACK (after a long beat)  
 We do what we do in Vegas.  
 (he smiles)  
 We gamble.

119 INT. THE STAGE - NIGHT

119

We see Sal, Julie, Nicky, Felix, Sonny, Daryl dancing -- with two new girls. We saw both of the new girls at the first audition that Nomi went to. One girl was the last finalist; the other girl was the one that Tony Moss said "try yoga or hanging from the ceiling" to.

As they are dancing --

AN ANNOUNCER (over music)  
 Ladies and gentlemen, the Stardust  
 proudly presents -- Miss Nomi Malone!

And Nomi comes dancing out to the front of the stage to MILD APPLAUSE. Her long hair has been cut short into a sleek Vegas style.

We see Zack and Molly watching her from backstage separately.

It is her moment of triumph. She sizzles. She burns. She soars. She's an angel. She's a whore. She's a whirling dervish. She's better than Cristal. She's hotter than anyone that we've ever seen.

The audience starts to applaud -- it turns into a ROAR, a response from some primal depth.

Zack smiles, stares at her, transfixed. Molly stares, her face expressionless.

120 INT. BACKSTAGE - AFTER THE SHOW

120

There are lots of people -- photographers, reporters, TV cameras. Nomi is talking to reporters. With her are Mr. Karlman, Zack and Phil Newkirk. Molly watches her from the side.

MR. KARLMAN

We could've brought anyone into this show -- Janet Jackson, Paula Abdul. Nomi Malone is what Vegas is all about. She's dazzling, exciting, and very, very sexy.

Nomi smiles. Bright lights and camera flashes go off in her face.

A REPORTER

Miss Malone, how do you feel about the show tonight?

NOMI (smiles)

I just hope I can be as good as the show is.

MR. KARLMAN (smiles)

You are, my dear. You are the show.

NOMI (smiles)

Thank you.

As bright lights and camera flashes go on in her face.

121 INT. NOMI'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

121

Cristal's dressing room is now hers. Explosions of roses are everywhere.

She is in front of the mirror taking her eyelashes off -- Molly is next to her, helping her take off her costume. Zack comes in. He kisses her on the cheek quickly.

ZACK

Are you ready to party?

NOMI (smiles)

Where?

ZACK

At the Paradise. We took out the bungalows.

NOMI

For what?

ZACK

For you.

She turns to him, her smile wide. He leans in and kisses her gently, briefly on the lips. She looks at him a long beat.

NOMI

Yayyy!

She laughs; it is a very girlish laugh.

ZACK (grins)

Hurry. I've got a limo waiting for us.

And he starts out.

NOMI

I don't have anything to wear.

He takes a package from behind his back, beautifully-wrapped, puts it on her table.

ZACK

Yes you do. Andrew Carver's coming, he saw the show!

And he leaves. As soon as he does --

NOMI (excited, to Molly)

Did you hear that? Andrew Carver's going to be there.

MOLLY

(after a beat, flat)

Yeah, I heard.

A beat -- Nomi turns from the mirror, looks at Molly.

NOMI

What's wrong with you?

Molly looks at her a long beat.

MOLLY

You pushed her, didn't you?

NOMI

(after a beat, hard)

No.

(a beat)

How can you talk that shit to me?

(a beat)

Julie saw it.

They look at each other a beat.

MOLLY

She couldn't have seen it. I saw Julie. Her back was to you.

Nomi looks at her a long beat.

NOMI

She saw it.

MOLLY (after a long beat)

Have fun at your party.

She starts out. Nomi goes after her.

NOMI

Molly -- come on, Molly.

She holds Molly's arm.

NOMI

You gotta come. Andrew's gonna be there!

MOLLY (after a beat)

I don't care.

She turns. Nomi puts her arms around her neck from the back, holds her.

NOMI (tenderly)

Molly... please... It ain't a party without you, Molly.

A beat, and then Molly heads out. A beat -- Nomi looks lost in her thoughts -- and then she looks at the beautifully-wrapped package on the table.

122 INT./EXT. SPECIAL WING OF THE PARADISE - HALL AND TERRACE - 122 NIGHT

Nomi, wearing a very flashy Vegas gold lame gown, and Zack, in a suit, come down a windy, marble staircase. Applause, cheers of a couple hundred people that have gathered in this special VIP wing - dancers from the show, highrollers, gamblers, bimbos. Everybody wears expensive dresses, gowns, suits.

As soon as they reach the floor we hear TRUMPETS blare. And walking towards them comes Caesar and his court, all in togas. People start chanting "Hail, Caesar! Hail, Caesar!" And while Caesar approaches Nomi, he starts singing "The Most Beautiful Girl In the World". When he is close to her he puts laurels on her head. Nomi laughs delightedly - more photos are taken. Mr. Karlman approaches, kisses her, walks her up to the doors leading to the terrace. At that moment fireworks go off there and Nomi sees the letters "NOMI MALONE" forming.

Suddenly she steps forward and puts herself right in front of the firework that's blazing around her. She heaves her arms high, a true star. Flashlights, applause and the song all blend together.

And then she sees Molly. She steps down and hugs her, Molly is embarrassed, as everyone is looking.

MOLLY

Okay. So what I want to know is -  
Where is Andrew?

They laugh.

123 INT./EXT. SPECIAL WING OF THE PARADISE - HALL AND TERRACE - 123  
LATER

They are standing at a buffet: Nomi, Zack, Mr. Karlman, Phil Newkirk, and Molly, a bit shy. In the middle is Tony Moss, making jokes.

TONY

Frank gets all pissed off at me. I said: "Frank, Jesus. I didn't know she was your girl." Frank says: "Don't you get it, schmuck. They're all my girls."

Everybody laughs. Again we hear trumpets. We see commotion near the entrance, people converging there. Nomi sees ANDREW CARVER come through, smiling, with two bodyguards. If anything, Andrew Carver is better-looking in person than on his posters. Molly, wide-eyed, pinches Nomi's arm. Zack hurries away to greet him.

ZACK (to Nomi)

Come on! I'll introduce you.

Nomi finds a garbage can to get rid of her plate. Zack is already ahead. Suddenly Julie is there at Nomi's side.

JULIE

I love your dress.

NOMI

Thank you.

She is uncomfortable with Julie, who smiles.

JULIE

Do you think I could be your understudy?

NOMI

(after a beat, slowly)  
I'll see what I can do.

JULIE

Thank you, darlin'.

As she heads away, Nomi, lost in thought, walks up to Zack who approaches with Andrew Carver.

ZACK

Nomi Malone - Andrew Carver.

Andrew kisses Nomi's hand.

ANDREW (smiles)  
You were sensational tonight.

NOMI (smiles)  
Thank you.

ANDREW (turns to Zack)  
Wherever did you find her?

ZACK  
I'll never tell.

Nomi laughs. Mr. Karlman passes by, greeting, he's already leaving. Zack turns for a moment to Mr. Karlman. Nomi signals Molly while she's trying to keep Andrew there.

NOMI (to Andrew)  
I like your songs.

Andrew bends forward and whispers in her ear.

ANDREW  
I like your ass. Call me.

Nomi gives him a look. At that moment, Molly joins them.

NOMI  
Molly Abrams - Andrew Carver.

ANDREW  
Hi.

He puts his hand out to shake Molly's, smiles a dazzling smile. She shakes his hand but doesn't know what to say.

MOLLY (blurting it)  
Andrew, I can't even thread a needle anymore.

Nomi laughs -- the others don't get it.

NOMI  
Molly's one of your biggest fans.

ANDREW  
Well then. Let me get her a drink.

And he puts his arm around her and heads away. We see the bodyguards glance at each other. Molly looks back to Nomi and mouths "Oh, God!" Nomi smiles.

Zack kisses her tenderly on the neck.

ZACK (quietly)  
You look so beautiful.

124 INT. THE HALLWAY - THE PARTY - LATER 124

The lights in the hallway have been dimmed. A little combo plays romantic music.

Couples are dancing. We see Zack and Nomi dancing very close.

We see Andrew talking to Molly against a wall. He is smiling. She looks bedazzled. She laughs. He puts an arm around her.

As she dances with Zack, Nomi sees Andrew leading Molly into a bungalow. Nomi smiles. She drapes her arms around Zack's neck.

125 INT. A BUNGALOW - THE PARTY 125

Andrew Carver is kissing Molly. His two Bodyguards suddenly appear. They close the door. Molly looks at them. At that moment Andrew slaps her viciously across the face.

126 INT. THE HALLWAY - THE PARTY - LATER 126

Zack is kissing Nomi as he dances with her, his hands around her butt, pulling her in very close. He kisses her ear.

ZACK

I could fall in love with you.

They kiss.

127 INT. THE BUNGALOW 127

Andrew Carver sits in a chair, watching, smiling... as one of his Bodyguards holds Molly down on the bed, his hand on her mouth... while the other one is raping her.

128 INT. THE HALLWAY - THE PARTY - LATER 128

The combo has finished playing. Zack is holding Nomi, looking into her eyes.

ZACK

Do you want to go?

Nomi looks at him and nods. They walk away.

At that moment, Nomi sees Molly. She staggers out of a bungalow into the hallway. Her legs are bloody. Her face is badly bruised.

NOMI (screaming)

Molly!

She runs to her. Before she gets there, Molly falls on the floor.

129 INT. A HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

129

Molly is in the hospital bed, her face covered with bandages. Her eyes are closed; she is hooked up to IV's.

A DOCTOR is there with Nomi and Zack.

THE DOCTOR

We've sedated her. She's in shock. She has a broken nose, vaginal tears.

Nomi closes her eyes.

THE DOCTOR

She'll be here three or four days.

Nomi's eyes are still closed. The Doctor heads out. Zack looks out at Molly, sees Phil Newkirk gesturing to him at the door. He gets up and heads out for the corridor.

Nomi opens her eyes and looks at Molly. Molly still has her eyes closed, but tears course down her face. Nomi wipes the tears on her face very carefully. A long beat, as she looks at Molly and heads out into the corridor.

130 INT. THE HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

130

She sees Zack reading something in a manila folder -- Phil is gone. They are alone in the corridor. She looks at Zack, seething with barely controlled rage.

NOMI

Where are the police?

ZACK (after a beat)

They're not here.

NOMI

Why aren't they here?

ZACK (after a beat)

Because they're not coming.

A long beat, as she looks at him... he still has the manila folder in his hand... and goes directly to a telephone and starts dialing.

ZACK (behind her)

Don't do it, Polly.

She freezes suddenly. A long beat -- her back is to him. And then she slowly hangs the phone up. She doesn't look at him.

NOMI

How did you find out?

ZACK  
 You were busted for disturbing the peace  
 at the Shark Club. They took your  
 prints.

A long beat, and then she turns on him, starts heading away.

NOMI  
 I don't have to listen to this.

ZACK (hard)  
 Yes you do!

And he grabs her roughly by the arm, opens a waiting room door,  
 and almost hurls her inside.

131 INT. THE WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

131

He slams the door, looks at her, looks at his folder.

ZACK  
 Polly Ann Costello. Your father killed  
 your mother and then killed himself.

She looks away from him, closes her eyes.

ZACK  
 You ran away from a foster home in  
 Oakland -- December, 1990.  
 (a beat)  
Arrests.

NOMI (quietly)  
 Don't please.

She has her face averted from him, her eyes closed. It is  
 almost a whimper.

ZACK  
 Denver -- soliciting. San Jose --  
 soliciting. Cheyenne -- soliciting.

She starts to cry quietly.

ZACK  
 Should I read you the rest of them?  
 (he glances at file)  
 How about possession of crack cocaine,  
 assault with a deadly weapon?

He stops, watches her as she cries quietly.

ZACK  
 Tell me something. Why did you stop  
 hooking? You had your future pretty  
 well mapped out.

NOMI (crying)  
I did what I had to do.

ZACK (smiles)  
Just like you did with Cristal.

She looks at him, sees the smile, looks away.

NOMI (quietly)  
I'm not a whore.

Zack watches her a long beat.

ZACK  
No, you're not. You're going to be a big star. Your face is going to be up on billboards. You'll make a lot of money for the Stardust.

A long beat -- she has stopped crying -- she looks at him.

NOMI  
You're going to let him get away with this?

ZACK  
Andrew Carver is at the Paradise this year. But he may be at the Riviera next year or the Stardust the year after that. He's part of the team. So are you.

She looks at him a long beat.

NOMI  
What about Molly?

ZACK  
You like her. I'll make sure he gives her enough money.

They look at each other a long beat.

ZACK (smiles)  
What did you charge?

She looks at him, doesn't understand.

ZACK  
Hooking.

She looks away from him.

NOMI (quietly)  
Fifty... a hundred sometimes.

ZACK  
You've got low self-esteem. You're a fantastic fuck.

A beat, and she turns back to him. She sees the smile. And she spits into his face. A beat... for a moment we think he's going to hit her... and then he wipes his face off with a handkerchief and looks at her.

ZACK

I was paying you a compliment.

132 INT. MOLLY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT 132

She sits in a chair at the side of Molly's bed, staring at her. Molly is asleep, moaning.

133 INT. MOLLY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAWN 133

She is holding Molly's hand. She is staring out the window. Molly is asleep.

134 INT. THE TRAILER - DAY 134

She sits in front of a mirror, dressing, putting make-up on. She wears very tight jeans and a top that we saw Molly wearing before which is very tight on her. She puts deep-red lipstick on. She looks at herself in the mirror.

NOMI

(to herself, quietly)

Showtime.

Her voice is dead, her face a mask. She reaches for the phone and, watching herself, dials.

NOMI

Andrew Carver, please.

135 INT. PARADISE HOTEL - THE PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - DAY 135

She gets off the elevator. The two Bodyguards are sitting by the elevator, which only leads to this suite. They speak with English accents.

A BODYGUARD

Hello there, love. Don't we look all tarted up?

He leers at her.

THE OTHER (smiles)

He's ready for you.

She heads for the door. They watch her butt.

136 INT. THE PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - DAY

136

She walks in. Andrew Carver is sitting in the living room in bathing shorts, watching her.

ANDREW (smiles)  
It didn't take you long.

NOMI (smiles)  
No.

She goes closer to him, stops. He looks her up and down. She takes her jacket off and then, slowly, teasingly, her top. She doesn't wear a bra. She has put lipstick on her nipples.

He stares at her breasts and smiles. She steps closer to him. He reaches around her and feels her butt. Her breasts are near his face. She starts to move her body against his as he sits there in the lap-dancer's movement.

ANDREW (smiles)  
Should we take the rest of it off?

A beat, and she smiles... nods... and reaches down to get her boots off. He keeps his hand on her butt, feeling it, his hand between the legs of her jeans... and the switchblade is suddenly out, open, and she has it against his throat. He stares, wide-eyed.

NOMI  
You make a sound and I'll kill you.

He gapes at her, his eyes wide. She steps back and, with a dancer's kick, kicks him in the throat with her cowboy boots. He slumps off the couch, choking. She kicks him again and again as he lies on the carpeted floor, dancing around him, kicking him with her boots, topless, the switchblade in her hand... in the stomach, in the groin, and then in his face.

Her movements look almost choreographed.

137 INT. THE ENTRANCE TO THE PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - DAY

137

Dressed, she comes out, closes the door. The Bodyguards sit by the elevator.

NOMI  
He said he wants to sleep.

A BODYGUARD  
Tired him out, did you, love?

He grins.

NOMI (smiles)  
Yeah.

And she gets in the elevator.

138 INT. MOLLY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

138

She walks in. Molly is still asleep. A NURSE is there.

THE NURSE

She's still out. It's the medication.

NOMI

Is she okay?

THE NURSE

She's okay.

A long beat and Nomi goes to the side of the bed. She kisses Molly on the head very tenderly.

139 INT. THE HOSPITAL - THE LOBBY

139

As she is about to go out the front door. She stops a beat. And then she turns and goes back to the information desk.

NOMI

Cristal Connors, please.

140 INT. CRISTAL'S HOSPITAL SUITE - DAY

140

It is a big, private suite. There are flowers everywhere. The TV is on to some soap opera. Cristal lies on the bed. She has her fancy straw cowboy hat on her head.

Nomi walks in and they look at each other a long beat.

CRISTAL

You know the best advice I ever gave you? If you're the only one left standin' up there...

NOMI (after a long beat)

They hire you.

CRISTAL (after a beat)

Thank you and good night. Cristal has left the building.

A long beat, as they look at each other... and Cristal smiles.

NOMI (quietly)

I'm sorry, Cristal.

She averts her eyes from her. Cristal looks at her a long beat.

CRISTAL

Yeah, I know just how sorry you are. How do you think I got my first lead?

They look at each other a long beat.

CRISTAL

There's always somebody younger and hungrier comin' down the stairs after you.

NOMI (after a long beat)

Why didn't you tell anyone?

CRISTAL

(after a beat, smiles)

Oh, hell, darlin'. I needed a rest. My lawyers are gonna get me a real nice settlement.

They look at each other a long beat.

NOMI

I gotta go.

Cristal looks at her a long beat, then, seriously --

CRISTAL

Aren't you gonna come over here and give me a big kiss?

They have their eyes on each other. A long beat, and Nomi goes over to the bed and sits on the side. She leans down and kisses Cristal on the lips. It is a long, lingering kiss.

Cristal looks at her a beat, takes her fancy cowboy hat off, and sticks it on Nomi's head.

CRISTAL (smiles)

'Bye, darlin'.

A beat, and then Nomi smiles.

NOMI

'Bye, darlin'.

141 EXT. A FREEWAY - DAY

141

She stands at the side of the road. She wears the fancy cowboy hat, jeans, the black leather jacket, and wrap-around sunglasses. She's got a cheap suitcase in front of her. She's got her thumb out.

Cars and trucks ROAR by her and then a hard-top, beaten-up Jeep we've seen before pulls to a stop. We hear Garth Brooks BLASTING. The door swings open. She grabs her suitcase, goes up to it. She sees Jeff. She smiles a little to herself. He doesn't recognize her.

JEFF

Hop in, pard.

She hesitates a beat.

JEFF  
Come on, this here's your lucky day.

As he opens the back door, she lifts the big suitcase into the back seat.

142 INT. THE JEEP - DAY

142

The Garth Brooks tape is still BLASTING. Jeff looks over at her, pressed against the door.

JEFF  
Did you gamble?

She nods.

JEFF (grins)  
Did you win?

She nods.

JEFF  
What'd you win?

NOMI (after a beat)  
Me.

He looks at her. She reaches over and shuts Garth Brooks off. And now he recognizes her.

JEFF  
Oh, shit. It's you!

She's got the switchblade out, holding it.

NOMI  
I want my fucking suitcase.

143 EXT. THE FREEWAY

143

As the Jeep goes down the road and passes a big billboard. There are still workmen up there finishing putting it up.

The billboard shows her face, her hair cut short. In big letters it says: "NOMI MALONE, 'GODDESS', THE STARDUST."

As we...

- FADE OUT.

THE END

THE "GODDESS" SHOW  
9/29/94

GODDESS

N1 - There is a volcano erupting in the background. Lava streams forward, even on the aisles of the stage, surrounding part of the audience. There are little eruptions all over the place. The dancers are "in fear". They split up in several groups and dance to the left, right, even front, but are thrown back, blocked by erupting fires that sprout from the crackling ground.

Apocalyptic feeling - day of judgment. They are all in extremely sophisticated clothes, men and women, but their apparent wealth is of no use. Blocks of stone shift, the thunderous sounds increase to a climax and suddenly the ground (or part of a foreground rock) splits open and the Goddess rises out of this fiery mouth. The dancers see her; approach her, are hesitant and then beg her for help. She is now in the middle, they dance around her, but she is already the leader - their panic disappears, their movements become coordinated, everything becomes more fluent. And more "passionate" - as if the outside fire is now inside them. The Goddess has given them fire, confidence, hope...

AVENGING ANGEL.

N2 - This is somewhere in a warehouse, loading dock area - catwalks, staircases, ramps, filthy windows, machinery. Motorcycles (10-15) crisscross over stage and ramps, sometimes jumping from one area to another - all their headlights on (stronger than normal). Along poles the dancers come down. Finally Cristal appears, she is tied to a chain as they lower her to the ground. The dancers are around her, rip the clothes off of her body.

Their moves are aggressive and violent, their hands are over her mostly naked body. She tries to get away, but they chase her and grab her, drag her to a motorcycle and spread her out on the saddle. Women

hold her hands and arms, the men are going to gang rape her. And then she is able to kick her legs loose - she does a somersault and is free.

But already all the women surround her. And she uses high kicks to keep them away - one, another, another. Suddenly she concentrates on Nomi. They have a violent dance and finally Nomi kicks her down. But Cristal is able to grab a blow torch and the fire blows Nomi away - she seems to burn. And Cristal comes up and uses the weapon on all. They rush away but her fire reaches them. And one after the other they fall down, burning. As an avenging angel Cristal stands there.

## FINALE

We are in an enormous pagan temple - big stone pillars rising up and disappearing straight up into "clair-obscur" There is an atmosphere of celebration. The dancers are whirling around each other, the Goddess in their middle. There is a feeling of joy, like in a black/Pentecostal meeting, with exuberant gospel singing.

And then the Goddess slowly starts to rise (she hangs on invisible wires). The dancers circle around her trying to hold on to her. But she rises above them, they can not touch her any more - so they are now on each other's shoulders, the women on the men so they can reach higher. And they do touch her, their hands caressing her legs for the last time, her feet, and up she goes, she is now above them. The dancers swirl around, stretching up their hands, it is impossible to touch her now, she is unreachable.

Cristal is high above them now, lights catch her, illuminate her, make her a star in the sky.