

INT. DANCE REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY

Several young girls, ranging in age from 7 to 13, warm up in their ballet uniforms. Our focus is on MAGGIE, 10, a nerdy little runt. Her large glasses make her look like a caricature. She is holding a head shot of a beautiful ballerina and large black sharpie marker.

Maggie imitates the warm up routines of the girls around her. She isn't as advanced as them and she knows it. The ballet instructor, MISS NOVAK, struts into the room and clears her throat to grab everyone's attention. The room falls silent.

MISS NOVAK

Ladies! I know you are all very excited for Lana Pencilton's visit. But I must warn you that her personal assistant has advised me that she does not sign autographs.

Miss Novak looks sharply at Maggie's marker. Disappointed, Maggie puts them away in her bag, where we see more Lana Pencilton paraphernalia tucked inside. Miss Novak's cell phone rings. She answers it.

MISS NOVAK (CONT'D)

(on the phone)

Yes. Yes. Fantastic! Goodbye.

(to the students)

Girls, Lana has arrived! She'll be up any second!

The little ballerinas squeal with excitement, including Maggie. Two girls, BRIDGET and CYNTHIA are especially excited.

BRIDGET

What do you think she'll be like?

CYNTHIA

Probably prettier in person than in all the pictures.

BRIDGET

I'm so nervous! Do you think she'll teach us any new dance moves?

CYNTHIA

I hope so!

MAGGIE

I hope she's a nice person!

Bridget and Cynthia ignore Maggie's comment. Cynthia noticed Maggie's shoes.

CYNTHIA

Those aren't real ballet slippers.

MAGGIE

I couldn't get the kind that everyone else has. But I found these and they work just fine.

BRIDGET

Where'd you find them? A landfill?

Bridget and Cynthia laugh. Maggie is embarrassed.

Suddenly, the door opens. In walks LANA PENCILTON, 30, lean, and timelessly beautiful. She takes her large sunglasses off and scans the room. She is followed closely by her PERSONAL ASSISTANT.

Maggie is bubbling with excitement but does a good job of staying calm. On the other hand, the other girls go crazy.

CYNTHIA

(to Bridget)

Oh my God, it's really her! Lana Pencilton!

BRIDGET

You were right! She's even prettier in person.

LANA

Hello girls. Thanks for having me this afternoon.

MISS NOVAK

We're in for a great treat. Miss Pencilton has agreed to give us a private performance!

The girls continue to squeal.

LANA

Please, call me Lana.

MISS NOVAK

(gushing)

Okay, Lana. I'll get the music.

Lana's Personal Assistant hands a CD to Miss Novak, who then pops it into a stereo. Classical music starts playing and Lana starts moving, more graceful than a swan.

We see Maggie. She is captivated, watching her idol dance in front of her. Cynthia and Bridget take a seat right in front of Maggie, blocking her view. Maggie struggles to catch a better glimpse.

The music ends and so does Lana's dancing. The girls rise in an uproar of applause and praise. Lana takes a bow.

LANA

Thank you! Do you girls have any questions for me?

The entire class, minus Maggie, rushes to Lana in excitement. They surround her in a swirl of tights and tutus, hands over fists trying to get closer to Lana. The Personal Assistant tries to block the little girls, but Lana stops her.

LANA

(to Personal Assistant)

It's okay. It's fine.

The Assistant backs off.

Maggie tries her best to squeeze into the mix but the other girls are making it impossible.

LANA (CONT'D)

Okay! Okay! One at a time!

(to Bridget)

What's your name?

BRIDGET

Bridget Larson. I love you so much! I've loved you ever since I saw you in The Nutcracker when I was six years old.

LANA

(laughing)

Wow! You're making me feel ancient.

Cynthia shoves her way to be in front of Lana.

CYNTHIA

My name's Cynthia Phelps. I've been a fan of yours for even longer, Lana! I'm going to be a famous ballerina one day. Just like you!

LANA

With a lot of hard work, I'm sure
you will be!

Miss Novak interjects.

MISS NOVAK

Girls! No shoving, please!

(to Lana)

I'm sorry Lana. They're just so
excited to see you.

LANA

Oh, that's perfectly fine! I'm
happy to see them too.

MISS NOVAK

We were hoping that the girls could
have some one on one time with you.
A chance for you to offer your
expert advice.

Lana's Personal Assistant sticks his head in.

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Miss Pencilton has an important
flight to catch.

LANA

That's not until much later. I'm
sure it will be fine.

MISS NOVAK

Fantastic!

Miss Novak grabs Lana's arm and leads her to a chair in the back
of the room. The girls quickly line up.

Maggie is pushed to the very back of the line, right behind
Bridget and Cynthia.

CYNTHIA

I can't believe we're actually
going to dance in front of Lana
Pencilton!

BRIDGET

I know, right? Pinch me!

MONTAGE: Lana sits patiently as several girls, one by one, dance
for her. Lana offers advice on their technique.

The Personal Assistant taps Miss Novak on the shoulder.

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Miss Novak, Miss Pencilton really
must be going now.

LANA

(to Personal Assistant)

There are only a few students left. It
will be fine.

The only girls left in line are Bridget, Cynthia, and Maggie.
Miss Novak signals Bridget to center stage.

Bridget takes her place. She dances gracefully to the music.
Maggie watches, trying to memorize the steps.

Bridget finishes.

BRIDGET

(excited)

What did you think, Lana?

LANA

Good.

Bridget seems disappointed.

BRIDGET

Just "good"?

LANA

Yes. You were a little stiff on
your chasse, and your pas de cheval
could use some work. But other than
that, I'd say you're pretty good!

Bridget walks away, seeming offended. Cynthia's turn.

CYNTHIA

I think you'll be very pleased with
my pas de cheval, Lana. It's my
specialty.

Cynthia smirks at Bridget, who sneers right back at her. The
music plays and Cynthia starts dancing. It seems that Cynthia is
trying extra hard to impress Lana, as she is putting a lot of
emphasis on her dance moves.

Cynthia goes to the corner of the room, takes a running leap and
BAM! Lands face first on the ground.

LANA

Oh my goodness, is she okay?

Miss Novak picks Cynthia up off the ground. Cynthia tries to continue with the performance.

CYNTHIA
I'm fine! I'm fine!
(to Miss Novak)
Let me go! You're ruining
everything!

Lana's Personal Assistant grabs her by the arm, forcing Lana up.

PERSONAL ASSISTANT
Sorry Miss Pencilton, but you're
about to miss your flight.

LANA
(to Miss Novak)
I'm sorry, Miss Novak, but I have
to go!

Miss Novak is still struggling with Cynthia, who is still trying to dance.

MISS NOVAK
Wait! Wait! We haven't taken your
picture with the lovely gift basket
we've yet to give you!

LANA
I'm so sorry, but I must go!
(to the class)
Goodbye everybody!

Maggie panics. She tries running after Lana, but the door shuts right in her face. She stands alone, shoulders slumped, sad as can be.

Bridget walks up to Maggie and puts her hand on her shoulder.

BRIDGET
Cheer up, Maggie. It isn't the end
of the world. Look at it this way:
There's no way you could have
danced well in those cheap shoes.
So, in a way, you saved yourself
from a lot of embarrassment.

Maggie, discouraged, keeps her head down as she exits the dance studio.

EXT. DANCE STUDIO - DAY

Maggie walks from the studio building up to a dumpster. She removes her ballet slippers.

She looks at the slippers, angry. Then she tosses them into the trash.

At that moment, a car is driving by. The car drives past Maggie, then stops, and reverses back to where Maggie is.

Maggie, confused, looks at the strange car in front of her. The front door opens, and Lana Pencilton walks out. Maggie is speechless.

Lana walks toward the dumpster, reaches in, and pulls out Maggie's shoes. She kneels down to be eye-level with Maggie.

LANA

Now why would anyone throw away a perfectly good pair of ballet slippers?

Maggie is still speechless. Lana looks at Maggie.

LANA (CONT'D)

You're the girl I didn't get a chance to meet today. I'm Lana.

Lana sticks out her hand. Maggie places her tiny hand in Lana's. They shake.

MAGGIE

Maggie.

LANA

Nice to meet you, Maggie. What are you doing out here?

MAGGIE

Ballet's not for me. I'm not good like the other girls. They're special. They stand out.

Lana smiles.

LANA

You want to know something? As soon as I walked into that room upstairs, those girls were all over me. Asking me this and that, I had no room to breathe! They were like one giant mob of tights and tutus.

(MORE)

LANA (cont'd)
I hate to admit it, but I was a
little bit annoyed.

Maggie giggles.

LANA (CONT'D)
But you, miss Maggie. You kept your
composure like a true class act.
And that's what made you special. I
noticed you because you were
different from all the rest.

Maggie looks at Lana in disbelief and joy.

LANA (CONT'D)
Now. Back to my first question. Why
are you dumping these shoes?

MAGGIE
I can't be good without good shoes
to dance in.

Lana laughs.

LANA
Let me share a valuable secret with
you, Maggie.
(beat)
It's not the shoes that make the
ballerina.

Lana examines the shoes.

LANA (CONT'D)
This takes me back. I used to have
a pair just like these when I was
around your age.

MAGGIE
Really?

Lana nods her head. She smiles, getting an idea.

LANA
Hold on. Stay right there.

Lana walks back to the car, digging through the back seat. She
comes back to Maggie and hands her an old pair of her ballet
slippers.

LANA (CONT'D)

I want you to have these. I know they're too big for you, but... In time.

Maggie smiles. She opens her mouth, but nothing comes out. She tries again... Lana holds her finger to Maggie's mouth.

LANA (CONT'D)

Shhh. It's okay. You don't have to say thank you. I know.

Lana notices a head shot tucked inside Maggie's backpack. She grabs it, along with the sharpie inside the pocket.

LANA (CONT'D)

This girl looks familiar.
(to Maggie)
Do you mind?

Maggie gives her approval. Lana signs the head shot.

LANA (CONT'D)

(reading aloud)
To Maggie; the one who was different from all the rest... For all the right reasons. Love, Lana.

Lana hands the head shot to an overjoyed Maggie.

Walking back to the car, Lana takes one more look at Maggie,

LANA (CONT'D)

Take care, Maggie.

Lana gets in the car and it drives away. At this moment, all of the other ballerina girls have made their way down to where Maggie is.

CYNTHIA

Was that Lana's car?
(to Maggie)
What did she say to you?

The other girls clamor around Maggie. Maggie simply stuffs the ballet shoes into her backpack and walks away, smiling.

FADE OUT.

THE END