

SCRIPT TITLE

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TEASER - A CREATION MYTH

EXT. CHICAGO - EARLY MORNING

Aerial view of the organism that is, was, Chicago. The arteries and veins that usually teem with life lie frozen and desolate in the winter light, silent save for a distant wind. Macro shrinks to micro as we witness it firsthand -

MONTAGE OF DEAD CHICAGO

- A rusty L-TRAIN, motionless in its yard.
- A pair of TOURIST BINOCULARS, standing lonely sentinel.
- A room, just dark enough to obscure its contents.
- Silhouetted against the morning light, the shape of a body lying on a bed, worryingly still. The room a disaster.
- A MURAL OF WINGS, meant to be finished by a body standing between it.
- The mouth of a subway station, a faint pattern of sound emanating from within. We follow it.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - CONTINUOUS

Unusually dark, the pattern cuts through clearly now - *CLICK, FZZT, CLICK. CLICK, FZZT, CLICK.*

Wending our way to the source, a LIGHTER held by a Man-In-Rags, bathed in an eery light. Eyes closed, he sits on a stack of upturned buckets, cutting a distinct, almost bored pose - right palm supporting chin, right leg crossed over left, left hand toying with the lighter all the while. A POSTCARD lies on the ground, its text "WISH YOU WERE -" cut short by the man's foot.

CLICK, FZZT- The chatter of the lighter ceases. The man tilts his head, straining to hear something. He opens his eyes, blinks, and sees us. He gives us the barest of nods then tilts his head to look behind us, searching for... something in the darkness. His eyes trace a line upwards and then, as if responding to a question, he nods, amused.

He stretches, stows the lighter in favor of a PAIR OF DRUMSTICKS. He stands up, taking the topmost bucket off of the stack he sits on and still upturned, places it on the ground in front of him. He cracks his knuckles, takes a breath, and starts beating out a slow rhythm - DUM, DUM, DUM - each beat pushing us back up and out to-

MONTAGE OF LIVING CHICAGO

Life seeps back into the once frozen world - the drumbeat gradually accrues tempo and complexity as-

- The train creakily starts.
- A RING BILLED GULL now stands on the tourist binoculars.
- The lights of the dark room flicker on, revealing an empty studio.
- The silhouetted figure stirs.
- A bundled up local walks past the wings.

The drums, rising, building.

- The train running full speed, plowing through snow.
- A second gull joins.
- A lean asian woman in active-wear stretches on the floor of the studio space, right foot taped.
- The silhouette, discernibly female, back to us on the edge of the bed, lazily stretching against the morning light.
- The morning commuter crowd shuffles by the wings, over a woman's shoulder, a small hand reaches out in its direction.
- Above the protective plastic sheet of a couch, dust motes float idly in the morning light.

The drums reach the zenith of a fever pitch.

Cut to black as we sit in the beat for a brief moment then -

TITLE CARD

Black again, the tempo of the drum slows-

Falling-

Giving way to a new percussion.

The tempered beating of a heart.

END TEASER

INT. KURVITZ STUDIO ROOM D - MORNING

Close on the face of the stretching woman from the studio, SENA PAK (late 20s) - Yin. She takes deep, desperate breaths and even behind eyes closed tightly it appears as if something is causing her great pain. Then-

Her eyes open. She looks upwards at the ceiling above, searching for something, anything.

Finding nothing.

Pull back to discover her in the center of the semi-spartan studio space, locked into a pose: one arm behind back, hand curled into a fist, the other arm mirrored in front. Despite her head straining as up as her neck will allow, the rigidity of her posture is vaguely reminiscent to that of the attention stance of a soldier.

Gradually, she lowers her head and finds in front of her a wall, smothered by thick, black curtains. (We will find this wall of curtains present in each studio room, always functioning as the spiritual "north," always closed unless noted otherwise.)

She releases the pose, walks to the back of the room, and picks up a water bottle. Before taking a sip, she discards the bottle and angrily stalks back to the center, assuming a position.

Inhale. Exhale.

Inhale. Exhale.

Inhale-

In perfect synchronicity, music and body burst into life.

CUE: SALTARELLE OP. 74 (0:14 - 0:40) / BUSK BY ASZURE BARTON (1:30 - 1:56)

To a Gregorian male chorus chanting French in rapid tempo, she moves with technical grace.

Flowing from restrained tight positions to unconfined large ones, she executes grand battements, jetés, interspersed arabesques. She travels across the floor in sudden stops and sudden starts.

More often than not, her hands remain locked behind her back but intermittently they sweep out with her legs, her body unfurling like a sail catching wind.

She continues, oscillating between the body confined to itself and the body free to the world. Off a slide on the floor and a jump back up she-

STOPS - the music cuts. She is once again in the initial pose we met her in, looking up.

Finding nothing.

She walks back to her discarded bottle and sips. She wipes her face with a towel and looks down into it.

Inhale and-

EXT. KURVITZ COMPANY HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Muted by the glass of a window connecting the hallway to the studio, Sena's face is buried in the towel, as if screaming into it.

Then - a figure rushes across our line of sight, wiping the room behind her clean with her passing. We turn to follow this familiar silhouette heading down the hall. She opens a door on her right and turns into-

INT. KURVITZ MAIN STUDIO ROOM - CONTINUOUS

QUINN MARTIN (late-20s) - Yang, enters a cavernous space. Light Marley vinyl flooring contrasts against black walls the dark metal latticework of a ventilation system looms above. Scattered in groups of various sizes around the floor and warming up is the CORPS, 18 active-wear clad bodies (one of them being Sena)

A WOMAN, older than the majority of the Corps although only in her late 30s sits front and center, devoted to a complex warmup routine. She is given a noticeable berth by the other members. Quinn absently hums a tune and breaches the woman's bubble. Passing within a foot of her, Quinn continues on in the direction of Sena, stretching alone in the back of the room.

Mid-stride, as if just remembering something, Quinn quickly adjusts her course and stops at MIA, early 20s, engaging in yoga, more specifically (and with nausea from the writer at the overt nature of this), the *Dancer* pose.

MIA
(confused)
Hi.

QUINN

Hi.

Quinn looks around, realizing she's lost. She pivots.

QUINN (CONT'D)

I, uh, just wanted to check in, see how you're doing. Know you're new, well, new-ish and since it's a big day and all...

MIA

Oh, right. The interview.

Quinn barks a bitter laugh.

QUINN

That's certainly one thing to call it.

MIA

(confused)

What else would it be called?

QUINN

Well, how many interviews have you been to where they ask you to prepare a solo? It is an interview but that's only half. It's a job interview, an audition.

Mia switches legs.

MIA

But they didn't say anything about a specific piece or a role or anything like that.

QUINN

Because *you're* the role.

Mia loses balance slightly, and resumes.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Think about it. A solo when auditioning for a specific role? Fine. We do those all the time. But for those they choose which one.

MIA

(following)

Okay...

QUINN

So when was the last time you actually got to pick which piece you did? I'm guessing it's when you were auditioning for schools and when you were auditioning for companies, right?

MIA

Yeah...

QUINN

(keep going)

So...

Mia stops the pose altogether as-

MIA

(ding)

Shit. I didn't even think about that.

MIA (CONT'D)

It's that big? But they never said anything about it being big.

QUINN

They never do. Fuckin' leadership will tell you it's just an interview and make it seem like it'll just be a nice chat and a quick dance you like but what they'll forget to mention is that the person you're talking to will be in charge of a third of the rep and that it's your job to impress them.

Quinn sighs, a genuine weight.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Fuckin'... people.

MIA

Um...

QUINN

Look, the main thing you need to worry about is your solo. How is it?

MIA
I mean, it's in the body and it
actually feels kind of good so...
fine?

QUINN
(winces)
Just fine?

MIA
I should practice.

QUINN
Never hurts.

MIA
Wait, you don't seem worried.

Quinn shrugs, her gaze drifting across the room.

QUINN
I'm keyed up. Besides-

Her gaze settles on the older woman in the front of the room.

QUINN (CONT'D)
(bloodlust)
My solo is great.

Mia looks at Quinn, startled by her intensity then-

MIA
(coming undone)
They always said a career in dance
was a bad idea...

QUINN
Hey.

Quinn claps Mia on the back.

QUINN (CONT'D)
They never stopped saying it.

THEO (O.S.)
Okay okay okay mon petits animaux,
we have a gala in three weeks and a
season in five so let's hit it.

Swivel to THEO (late-30s) entering with clipboard and dance bag. He sets his bag on the ground and reads off the clipboard. He looks up and-

THEO (CONT'D)
 Ket watch that alignment. We're
 working from the spine a lot this
 season and this piece is no
 exception.

We sweep behind his back and the room sweeps with him-

INT. KURVITZ MAIN STUDIO - CONTINUOUS SHOT (LATER TIME)

Four members of the Corps, including Sena, now stand evenly spaced in a single row, each in varying states of exhaustion. The remainder hover on the perimeter.

THEO
 Flora- grounding, but we've known
 that. Matan- the rise and the fall,
 that's yours but you need to make
 it yours. Let's see more of you.
 Sena-

Theo gives a look - *not even going to say it*. Sena's face is neutral but she balls her fists.

THEO (CONT'D)
 (to Corps)
 Next group, vite!

Quinn, Mia, the older woman, and a young man take the center, swapping places with the current group. Sena and Quinn pass each other, each staring straight ahead, as if pointedly so.

THEO (CONT'D)
 A warmup to get it back in the body
 but that doesn't mean don't try.

The quartet takes up a kneeling position.

THEO (CONT'D)
 Bon? Bon.
 (clapping beat)
 And. Let. Us. Go-

Push in on the four kneeling backs. A droning sound rises-

CUE: DRUM AND DRONE 0:00 - 0:38 / THIS, THAT, AND THE THIRD
 BY RENA BUTLER (0:00 - 0:38)

ROUND 1

As the sound builds the edges of the room seem to darken. The dancers rise, slowly turning around, looking upwards, towards... something. Then, with the kick of the drum they-

COWER - downwards and each in their own way. From there moving in sync, staccato movements slowly opening up to larger actions until they are turning, sweeping, swiveling, occasionally a pantomime or quick isolated oscillation on a part of the body. However, despite the movements, their position in the room remains relatively static throughout.

Perhaps it's the dimness of the periphery but there's something about Quinn, she seems somehow brighter than the other three, as if illuminated by an additional source. Then -

The drum cuts and like marionettes cut from their strings, they **FALL**. The room's lighting remains, it is certainly darker than when they began.

THEO (CONT'D)

(to the Corps)

Again, just because we're warming up the bodies that doesn't mean you can't commit with the rest of yourselves.

(then, to the dancers)

Quinn, good.

Quinn points at herself and shoots the older woman a look - *who, me?* The woman waves a hand around her head, as if shooing away a fly.

THEO (CONT'D)

Now we move. Remember, that while technique is important, it's only a foundation we stand on so we can reach further, reach for more. Why do we look up? How do we feel about what lies outside of what confines us? Are we curious? Scared? In the movement we add our technique, our thoughts, our feelings, our *answers* to these questions and we find that more. Now...

The dancers get up and resume their kneel once again.

THEO (CONT'D)

Bon.

(counting beat)

5. 6. 7. 8.

ROUND 2

CUE: DRUM AND DRONE (0:00 - 0:38) / THIS, THAT, AND THE THIRD BY RENA BUTLER (0:00 - 0:38)

However, this time, as the drone builds the lights of the room dim drastically, we can now discern each performing dancer is bathed in a perfect square of light. When they look up, they are blinded. On Quinn's face as she seems to see something behind her light and then-

COWER downwards. As the dance begins again we see now that they were merely moving within the confines of their boxes of light. The room continues to fall darker, the dancers brighter.

It feels like they are all that is left in the world.

Quinn and the older woman are so bright as to be near blinding, leaving Mia and the younger man tepid in comparison. Maybe it's the light but the SHIRT of the woman seems to be drained of color and they **FALL**-

INT. KURVITZ COMMON AREA - LATER

THWUMP - Quinn falls down onto a couch in the recreational room, eating a candy bar. A MAN passes by.

MAN

Good job this morning, Quinn.
Where've you been hiding that?

Quinn grins and waves her hand above her head, as if shooing away a fly.

Quinn pulls out a vape and takes a pull. She follows the vapor trail up. Her grin fades as she takes another pull and surveys the common area.

A young man, standing in a corner of the room, counting time to himself and marking through a phrase of choreography.

On the opposite side of the room from him we see a young woman, sitting cross-legged on the floor, eyes closed, meditating.

At a table, a woman on her phone, texting. Quinn - a strange relief.

The woman puts her phone down and picks up a book, "THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING."

Quinn sighs and covers her eyes with the crook of her elbow.

A beat.

She pulls herself up

INT. KURVITZ STUDIO ROOM B - LATER

Floor. Lacquered wood paneling then-

A tape-wrapped foot, moving backwards, a familiar chanting of French

CUE: SALTARELLE OP. 74 (0:42 - 1:01) / BUSK BY ASZURE BARTON (1:58 - 2:17)

The foot is gone as soon as it came but the music stays. We pull back to find Sena engaged in new phrases of choreography, the same first piece she was bashing her head against.

She stutters backwards but, before falling, she catches herself and turns, opening up her body and sweeping it forward across the floor to execute a grand jeté. She lands and brings herself to a stop.

She holds a hand over her eyes, as if searching for something in the horizon. Exhausted, her body melts into a slouch then- she forces herself back up and shakes a limp arm across her body once, twice, three times, four. On the fifth, she puts her arms behind her back and spins, arching her body upwards and falls onto her knees, head pointed down, hands behind her back. The music cuts.

With her head pointed down she catches her breath for a few moments.

She looks up and finds herself in front of her a wall of curtains. They ripple, as if struck by a breeze. She studies them and as if from by a great distance, a faint crackling sound.

Then- with a loud POP- she's back to reality.

She stands up and moves to the center of the room, taking up a pose. For a moment, she looks at the curtains with worry. Then, suddenly, she jumps and off her landing-

INT. KURVITZ MAIN HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Quinn stands in front of a wall, meticulously divided into subplots of rectangles, squares, times, names, information, in other words - a whole fuckin' corkboard/whiteboard situation.

She writes something down and then steps backwards, examining the complex layout with a finger, searching. Then she taps a name written in marker- "ANDREA."

She looks up. On a poster above the board is the older woman, frozen in mid-motion eyes cast downwards. Quinn stares back and, like a bull about to charge, exhales defiantly through her nose.

EXT. KURVITZ COMPANY SIDE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

CUE: RITE OF SPRING, RITUAL OF ABDUCTION (0:02 - 0:34) / RITE OF SPRING BY PINA BAUSCH (7:09 - 7:41)

Close on Quinn. Gone is the look of defiance, in its stead, grim realization. Pull back to find her staring through the sliver of window into Studio C.

INT. KURVITZ STUDIO ROOM C - CONTINUOUS

The music continues to boom its alarm and terror as we find the older woman, Andrea, dancing with a terrifyingly frantic energy, as if she were being tortured. However, she is now clad in a WHITE SHIFT, the hem lined with dirt.

She is a thunder of twirling arms, bows, poses, contracts and releases.

The motions become larger, spread out, lived in. Tapping into wellsprings of longing she stretches her arms outwards. Progressing into a series of movements that have an almost languid quality.

Off of a leap and a boom of the music-

INT. KURVITZ COMPANY OFFICE AREA - LATER

KNOCK KNOCK.

WOMAN
(muffled)
Mmhm.

INT. DENISE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Sena enters a bare office, a STACK OF FRAMED POSTERS leans against one wall next to a lonely potted plant and an offensively neutral couch. Behind a wooden desk covered in sheafs of scattered papers sits DENISE (late-40s), a fashionable coat over activewear of her own.

SENA
You wanted to see me?

DENISE
I did. Have a seat.

Denise takes off her reading glasses.

DENISE (CONT'D)
You know how I was a dancer here,
right?

SENA
Yeah. In the early 2000's, right?

DENISE
That's right! Look at the memory on
you. I was a dancer in this company
from 1999 - 2007. We were at the
original building back then, which,
funny enough, was originally a
church.

SENA
Kurvitz was in a church?

DENISE
I know, can you believe that?

Sena takes the question literally, she thinks about it. Then-

SENA
I can.

Denise studies her for a moment.

DENISE
Me too and for some reason, it
makes perfect sense. There's
something spiritual about all this.
Whether its the shamans getting
crazy around a fire drinking all
kinds of who-knows-what. I think in
just about any culture in the world
you can find some kind of person
swaying inside some kind of church.
I mean, even the bible says it
outright, "Let them praise his name
with dancing, praise him with
tambourines and dance." But bible
or not, you walk into any studio
before a class starts and you feel
it. This kind of quiet, like when
it snows and everything is so still
and beautiful.

(MORE)

DENISE (CONT'D)

I am so lucky to be here, doing this, and there's just about nothing in the world I would trade it for.

(back to the moment)

How about you? Can you say the same?

SENA

I... I mean, yeah. I think so.

Denise sighs.

DENISE

(bah)

Thinking. It's good but it's only half.

Sena sits there, processing.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Do you remember last winter season? I do. It was around the time I started interviewing for this job so naturally, I was curious to see what, and who, i'd be working with. I remember there were some interesting pieces, and a few solid dancers, but I specifically remember you. You had this energy. You were just so, so... *alive*. I swear watching you there were times I didn't even realize I was holding my breath.

(back to the bitter truth)

Look. I know things change, life happens and I know that when life happens, it affects everything else within it. Especially what we do here. But, at the end of the day, we do it professionally. Kurvitz was once one of the best contemporary companies in the world so we have to operate at that level. Look, what i'm saying is, Sena? Somethings got to give. It's time to come back. Because if you don't...

(reluctant, stuck)

Somethings got to give.

INT. KURVITZ COMPANY OFFICE AREA - SIMULTANEOUS

Across the worn bullpen, Quinn observes Sena and Denise talking through the office window. Laughter from an open doorway draws her attention and she moves towards it. Finding Theo, with three others eating lunch in a conference room. Quinn knocks on the door.

QUINN
Theo? Got a minute.

Theo looks down at his lunch.

QUINN (CONT'D)
(smallest of cracks)
Please.

THEO
Fine.

Theo sticks his fork into his meal and stands up.

THEO (CONT'D)
But I got salmon and I like it
better warm so you're only getting
2 minutes.

Theo and Quinn sit in two office chairs at desks abandoned for the lunch hour.

THEO (CONT'D)
Okay. Quoi?

Quinn looks at him.

QUINN
Aren't you from Philly?

Theo stands up.

QUINN (CONT'D)
Wait, wait, i'm sorry. I can't help
myself. Really, I'm sorry.

Theo sits back down.

QUINN (CONT'D)
Pina Bausch. Any tips?

THEO
Bausch? She's not your style.

QUINN
I'm making her my style.

THEO
(intrigued)
Why?

QUINN
Look, do you have any tips or not?

THEO
(insisting, playful)
Why?

A beat.

QUINN
Because I want to do Rite of Spring
better than Andrea.

Theo leans back in his chair.

THEO
You know... I had a feeling.

QUINN
Bausch.

THEO
Fine. She doesn't have any distinct
language, at least to the extent
that Graham or Limón do but I think
this is her quote, "what I try to
do is find a language for life."

Quinn waves it away.

QUINN
Yeah, yeah, they all have some
quote about life. What else.

Theo half-feigns outrage, he physically clutches imaginary
pearls.

THEO
I'm *sorry*, I thought you wanted my
help.

QUINN
I do, but a quote isn't help. It's
an Instagram post in cursive.

THEO
... fine.
(thinking)
Bausch, Bausch, Bausch.
(aha)
(MORE)

THEO (CONT'D)

She was a storyteller, she believed that the body was really just a vessel for story so that's the tip. Focus on the story.

QUINN

And what's the story of *Rite of Spring*?

THEO

You don't know the story of the piece you're doing? A piece so famous people rioted after its premiere?

QUINN

I mean I know what it is but I just want to make sure that you know.

Theo shakes his head.

THEO

It's about a woman who dances herself to death to end winter. That's what you should focus on.

QUINN

Death?

THEO

Sacrifice.

Theo gets up.

THEO (CONT'D)

How much are you willing to give up?

Off of Quinn's face, processing-

INT. KURVITZ MAIN HALLWAY - LATER

Sena's face, processing. She leans forward and writes something on the schedule board. Then- a loud clattering sound, as if something was upended.

Sena investigates, walking towards the common area where she sees the back of a WOMAN sitting at a table, a PALO SANTO stick burning at her side. Sena approaches and puts a hand on the woman's shoulder. The woman feels it and without looking up-

WOMAN

Sena.

The woman (mid 20s) kisses her hand as she studies what we can now see as COINS scattered around a table. She references a book.

SENA

(re: palo santo)

Aren't you going to set something off?

WOMAN

Who knows.

SENA

(light chastising)

Flora.

FLORA

(mocking)

Sena.

Sena takes a seat next to her.

SENA

What do they say?

FLORA

No clue just yet. There's this whole yin-yang thing going on and then you get into like systems and hexagrams. It's way different than tarot.

Sena lays her head against the table and stares up at the smoke curling its way upwards. Flora actually registers Sena.

FLORA (CONT'D)

You okay?

SENA

(torn)

You know, I think i'm-

PETER (O.S.)

Are either of you doing anything?

Peter stands leaning into the room from the hallway. He looks over Flora's shoulder at the situation on the table.

PETER (CONT'D)
 Right... Sena, can you do me a
 favor and run down to Brian and
 grab a prop for my piece, he'll
 know the one. Thanks.

Peter exits and then peeks his head back.

PETER (CONT'D)
 Flora. Get rid of that.

Peter exits.

FLORA
 Fascist.

Sena gets up and pats Flora's head as she steps into-

INT. KURVITZ PRODUCTION WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

A battlefield of order and chaos, the room a jungle of wires, masks, fabric, costumes, carpentry tools, miscellaneous props in varying stages of creation or destruction. A large pot bubbles on a portable stove, containing a murky liquid and some kind of fabric within. She looks around and doesn't see anyone so she steps in and idly wanders the room.

Eventually, she arrives at the prop section and enters its forest.

Off a mannequin she delicately removes a crown and places it on her own head. It's slightly too big for her. She puts it back.

On a nearby table she spots a lifelike model of an Owl and walks up to it. Besides it is an outlandishly large book. She taps on it, just painted wood.

Up against one section of the wall, she spies a rainstick. She moves towards it and-

Trips on something, the culprit: a pile of PAINTED FABRIC. She unveils it to see what its supposed to be, hues of orange and red, lighter at the bottom and darker, more oppressive, at the top. She studies it, hypnotized, almost as if she were

Falling

Into

It.

Muffled, a sound comes, a distant crackling.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Need anything?

SENA
(lost in something, sad)
Probably.

Sena jerks back to reality, realizing where she is again.
BRIAN (late 30s) stands in the doorway.

SENA (CONT'D)
I mean, yes. Sorry. I need a prop
for Peter.

BRIAN
You got it.

Sena looks at the fabric again.

PRELAP - A DOOR OPENING

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

The door closes as Quinn enters the bathroom. She goes to the sink, turns on the faucet and looks into the mirror - *confused*.

With the faucet still running, she turns around and sorts through her bag, pulling out her vape and a CONTAINER OF GUM. She holds the container as if it were heavier than it is.

As if reluctantly, she puts it back in her bag, trading it for her phone. As she hits her vape she pulls up the wikipedia entry for Rite of Spring she scrolls through until-

A toilet flushes and a stall door opens to Andrea, in the practice clothes she was wearing this morning. The two make eye contact for a brief moment as Quinn exhales vapor. Andrea washes her hands in the adjoining sink.

She heads towards the exit but before doing so stops in front of Quinn and leans past her, turning off the sink behind.

ANDREA
Wasteful.

Quinn stares at the door as it shuts behind Andrea.

A beat.

Quinn opens up her bag, takes the container of gum and deposits a piece into her hand. She looks at her hand for a moment, what she holds is bright pink and its texture seems slightly rubb- she pops it into her mouth, chews and swallows.

She turns around, turns the faucet back on, and once again looks in the mirror. There is no confusion. She bends down to rub water on her face and when she gets up- there is no reflection. Nonchalant, she considers this and exits. The faucet still running behind her.

INT. KURVITZ STUDIO ROOM D - LATER

AN UPSIDE DOWN CLOCK. We pull back to find that it is Quinn upside down as she stands in the center of the studio space, looking leaning as far back as her body will allow without falling. She raises her arms and locks her hands above her head. She gradually leans back even further and just as she loses her gravity-

The dark booming call and response of drums and trumpets.

CUE: RITE OF SPRING, RITUAL OF ABDUCTION (0:02 - 0:34) / RITE OF SPRING BY PINA BAUSCH (7:09 - 7:41)

Her arms catch around something invisible, but substantive enough to keep her aloft, then, with the momentum of the invisible force, she slides backwards as if being dragged by what she clings to. Then, an earthquake of twirling arms, bows, poses, contracts, releases, and with her arms once again raised above her head, she hops and -

And comes down, dim light, now wearing a familiar WHITE SHIFT. The motions become larger, spread out, lived in. Wellsprings of longing feeling in both face and body.

The same choreography as Andrea.

Quinn's head pushes backwards as her body moves forwards. Like a rubber band, they snap back to each other and using the force of the tension released she converts it into a jump-

And finds herself landing on DIRT. With a twirl, she kicks it up and then travels across the room, there with eyes closed she spins herself once and after the rotation begins a fall- only to use the momentum to travel again and repeat this motion, spin, rotation, fall- and then a third travel to another location where we repeat, spin, rotation,

She holds the pose but is now, once again, just a human in a dance studio. She looks up at the ceiling and smiles.

INT. KURVITZ SIDE HALLWAY - LATER

Near a closed door, Sena sits on the floor and massages her right foot. She unwraps the bandage for a moment and spots a few flecks of DRIED BLOOD. At this, she turns to her bag unzips a side pocket and rummages around, finding nothing. With a sigh she opens the main compartment and dives in, feeling around with her hands. Confused, she pulls something out- a worn LIGHTER. She studies it for a moment and-

The door opens to Quinn.

QUINN

Oh. Sorry.

SENA

It's okay. It looked like you were in it.

QUINN

I was.

(re: the bandage)

Everything... okay?

SENA

Yep.

Sena says nothing, she wraps the bandage back around her foot. Quinn walks away but stops.

QUINN

Sena, listen, I hope you feel like you can...

Sena looks up, her face a mask.

QUINN (CONT'D)

You know, knock. If I'm running late or anything.

SENA

Yep.

Sena looks back down and continues wrapping her foot.

INT. KURVITZ MAIN HALLWAY - LATER

Quinn stands, leaning against the wall, outside of Studio A. She looks at the floor and then looks at the time, 5:03. The windows are blacked out for privacy but through the door we can hear a burst of laughter. She sits. Then- the door opens and Quinn stands up. Andrea exits with LYRA (40s), her hair somewhere between frizzy and frazzled. They hug.

It goes on for just long enough. They separate.

ANDREA
Always great seeing you.

LYRA
Same. Tell Mike I say hi.

Andrea exits.

LYRA (CONT'D)
Cass, right? I'm Lyra, nice to meet you.

QUINN
God I wish, she's gorgeous. You'll see when you meet her. Quinn.

They shake hands and Lyra looks at her clipboard.

LYRA
Oh, weird, I wonder why I thought you were someone else.

QUINN
No clue. But if it makes you feel any better you can call me whatever name you want, Cass, "Mad Dog," "doctor."

LYRA
(neutral, studying)
Is that right?

QUINN
Sure, why not? It's just a name. Anyways, shall we? I've got a solo you'll love. I bring about spring!

Quinn and Lyra enter the room, the door shutting behind them.

INT. KURVITZ STUDIO ROOM D - LATER

Sena, as we first met her: in the center of the same semi-spartan studio space, the same heavy breaths, the same pose looking up. However, this time her eyes are open, glazed over.

Gradually, she lowers her head and finds herself facing that same wall, smothered by the same black curtains. Muffled, a sound comes, a distant crackling.

She walks to the back of the room, and picks up her water bottle. Before taking a sip, she discards the bottle and angrily stalks back, walking past the center and-

She opens the curtains, revealing - A WALL OF MIRRORS. The crackling sound is clearer now.

We shift to her side and through the reflection we reveal a plume of smoke stemming from her bag, as if something were burning inside of it.

In alarm she turns around - no smoke.

She walks to it and rifles through the main compartment, pulling out the lighter. She collapses against the wall and studies it.

INT. KURVITZ MAIN HALLWAY - LATER

Sena sits on the floor facing the door to studio A. She checks her phone, 5:32pm. She puts it back down and picks up the lighter. She flicks it to life and the crackling sound bursts.

Click. Off.

Click. On.

The door opens and Lyra peeks her head out.

LYRA

Sena? Thought you weren't coming.
(checking her clipboard)
You are, Sena right?

SENA

Yes. Sorry I would have knocked but
I thought you were still in your
interview for some reason.

LYRA

We ended early. Come on in.

INT. STUDIO ROOM A - CONTINUOUS

Sena and Lyra sit on the floor. Lyra writes something on her clipboard.

LYRA

(without looking up)
So how are you today?

SENA

(torn)

You know I think I'm...

(then)

I think i'm fine. How about you?

LYRA

Oh, you know, fine. It's been a busy day. It says here that you've been with the company for-

SENA

(word vomit)

I think I've lost something and I don't know how to get it back or if it's ever going to come back at all.

Lyra looks up at her.

LYRA

Um...

SENA

Sorry, it's just that you asked how I am and-

Lyra holds up a hand.

LYRA

It's okay. Really.

Lyra puts her clipboard down.

LYRA (CONT'D)

(a bad taste on the tongue)

Interviews. They feel so performative and not in the good way. I'd rather just have it all be out there. Although maybe not as directly and all at once. Like - ah! Overload. You know?

SENA

Sorry. I really don't know where that came from. I think that might be the problem.

Lyra studies her.

LYRA

I might have misheard in the whole-

Lyra gestures vaguely - *mess*

LYRA (CONT'D)
But you said you lost something.
What did you lose?

SENA
(struggling to articulate)
When I danced, I had this, this...
feeling like I was only alive when
I moved.

LYRA
What does it feel like now? When
you move.

SENA
Like even when I jump I'm still
touching the ground.

LYRA
(a puzzle)
You have a solo, right?

SENA
Only technically.

LYR
Can I see it?

Sena sighs.

SENA
Yeah.

Sena stands up and walks towards the center of the room.

LYRA
What's the name of the piece?

SENA
Busk.

LYRA
Okay. When you're ready.

Sena prepares herself. She closes her eyes and takes a deep
breath, in - out.

CUE: SALTARELLE OP. 74 - 0:14 - 0:18 / BUSK BY ASZURE BARTON
1:30 - 1:34

The music starts and she does the same movements we met her
in.

Traveling across the floor, moving from restrained tight positions but before opening up to the larger, unconfined ones-

She stops, the music cuts.

SENA

Actually. Sorry. I don't think I can do this.

LYRA

That's okay, just take it again from the top, you'll be fine.

SENA

No. I mean, I think if I do this piece again, i'm going to... I think i'm going to, like, snap.

LYRA

Yeah?

Sena looks Lyra in the eye.

SENA

Yes.

LYRA

Well then... let's see that.

SENA

See what?

LYRA

The snap. It's much better anyways especially for what we're doing here.

SENA

But there's no choreography. I don't have-

Lyra waves her hand dismissively.

LYRA

Who cares? It starts somewhere.

SENA

I'm sorry. I don't think I know what you want me-

LYRA

I'm not asking you to think about it. Just move! Go for it.

SENA
Just... go?

Lyra gives a look - *just go*.

LYRA
Just go.

Sena chews on it for a moment. Then swallows. She moves to the front of the room, passing Lyra.

SENA
(sheepish)
I think this is going to help.

Sena grabs one side of the curtains behind her, dragging them open. Lyra does the same with the other.

Sena strides back to the center and takes a glance at her reflection, she is **BURNING ALIVE** - the sound of a roaring inferno.

She looks down at her hands - completely fine.

Sena closes her eyes and takes a deep inhale. In - out.

The inferno roars, louder than ever. She clenches, a pain passing behind her closed eyes.

She breathes again. In - out. Louder and louder until-

A vacuum of total silence. Then-

In - Out. On her exhale, smoke trails out of her nose.

In - out. Something shifts within her - *peace by acceptance*.

A faint thumping begins, a beating heart swiftly climbing up in tempo.

It gives way to a familiar kind of percussion, a drum. The tempo rises, finding a plateau around the rim of loose mania.

A guitar takes the downbeat beginning -

CUE: Hēllæ Kíttý BY ALICE LONGYU GAO (0:00 - 0:53) - ORIGINAL CHOREOGRAPHY

INT. CHILDHOOD HOME - CONTINUOUS

Sena opens her eyes, now dressed in a black hanbok, standing in a hyper-sanitized living room, plastic coverings garnishing the furniture, dust motes floating lazily in dusk's light. Five photos line the wall, each *just* far enough away from another, four of the frames are empty. This is what we've been working to, this is dance.

ALICE LONGYU GAO (V.O.)
GO TO THERAPY OR ELSE YOU'RE GONNA
GO TO JAIL.

The world explodes and Sena with it, possessed, primal, she hurls herself around the room.

Staggering.

Crashing into walls.

She recovers, off-balance, and, as her body leaps forward, as if beckoned by the call of a shift in gravity itself. While actions extreme her bearing is confused but ultimately curious.

ALICE LONGYU GAO (V.O.)
BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM

EACH. BOOM. A. NEW. POSITION. Jerking, with explosive motions. She repeats the phrase again but this time, with each jerk, a piece of the room EXPLODES- a vase, a chair, a painting, a television, the picture. She stumbles out-

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Into the foyer, finding herself confronting a staircase. She tries to walk up but, as if slipping, she falls on the second step. She picks herself up, does it again. Slips. Falls. She resigns herself to something. Like an animal, she crawls up the stairs on hands and knees.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Up into a hallway - as she arrives she picks herself up and careens into a wall, the wall falls down exposing inky void. She peers down its edge and we look up at her from below. As if by someone or something she is yanked back into -

INT. CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A child's bedroom, posters, photos, all blank except the one photo.

MUSIC CUE: CUT TO SECOND CHORUS, 1:49 - 2:06

The music shifts here into the bridge, the romantic air of an Italian night, Sena's movements match. Gone is the primal nature, in it's stead elegance, grace. With a ballet-esque smoothness she pantomimes the pouring of a liquid from a heavy, grand vase about the size of her torso, the heft of solid metal. As she pours, douses, she closes her eyes and our world shrinks with her, to her - a dance that takes place solely behind the mask of one's face.

ALICE LONGYU GAO (V.O)
Ciao Bella, Ciao Bella, Bellissimo.

She shudders at the guitar - *Anger*.

ALICE LONGYU GAO (V.O) (CONT'D)
Ciao Bella, Ciao Bella, Bellissimo.

She sways to the accordion - *Relief*.

ALICE LONGYU GAO (V.O) (CONT'D)
Ciao Bella, Ciao Bella, Bellissimo.

All together now, building - *Sadness*.

ALICE LONGYU GAO (V.O) (CONT'D)
Ciao Bella, Ciao Bella, Bellissimo.

Anger.

MUSIC CUE: CUT TO, 2:24

ALICE LONGYU GAO (V.O.)
CIAO BELLA, CIAO BELLA, BELLISSIMO.

She opens her eyes and the song kicks us out to-

BLACK.

Afterword

If you made it this far and see this afterword you might be asking yourself "why does this pilot need a foreword, a playlist, an afterword, a website, and a bibliography? Shouldn't all the information be present within the script I just read?" And to that I'd say, I love that you're asking that question as it illustrates a care for the form and, if it were any other form of writing I think you'd be correct. However, this is screenwriting and since there is so much work being asked of the screen, at least within this piece, here is a foreword, a playlist, an afterword, a website, and a bibliography to further emphasize the importance of the visual translation. Hell, when a third of the writing is, in so many ways, just stage directions of people flailing their limbs in varying directions I think *not* talking about the stage and the limbs would be the greater disservice.

However let it be known that these forewords, afterwords, playlists, etc. are not necessarily attempts to provide clarity as much as they are reminders of the important aspects contained within. Namely, the importance that what we see, what is being seen by the *characters*, is not just simply an artistic flourish of magical realism but rather the keys to an aspect of their fundamental motivations.

That being said, allow me to now explain the conceit of Motion and how it relates to the story itself and then I'll piss off.

At a fundamental level, Motion is the attempt at integrating the language of the music video into the language of television storytelling. Some might ask, "would it not be considered a musical?" To which I would say, "again, what a great question and yes I think *technically* Motion is." But, perhaps a key difference being that the musical aspects of this particular piece are constructed and presented within the complex system of a very much real sport/game.

And the game of this sport, the game of dance, is fundamentally interwoven into the script. It is manifested in costume changes, squares of light, a woman on fire. Theo says as much about it from round 1 to round 2. It is there in the script but, more importantly, it was there long before the script ever got made. In fact, I am not a writer as much as a thief stealing this idea from what has been apparently true to dancers for as long as they've been around. It's a truth I'm stealing from the very first person who ever stomped their foot to a beat.

While I am unfortunately nowhere close to being a professional dancer (although I always hope someone will see me on a dance floor one day and confuse me for one), I am simply a person with a curiosity for understanding how various worlds function. so in the research of this piece I was lucky enough to be able to interview many people who are professional dancers, teachers of dance, lovers of dance, etc.. And across these interviews there was a word I heard multiple times, "transcendence." Dancers being overly dramatic? To some degree, absolutely. But, most interestingly to me, they used this word to describe what they do all completely independent of each other and without any prompt of mine.

So- the dirt lined hem, the squares of light, the woman on fire, are the manifestations of this element of transcendence (heretofore known as the "State"). The game of the State being that each dancer can only attain it relative to the levels of their individual psychological/spiritual/technical connection to the piece they are performing, practicing, staging. Sena's ending of full transportation was a representation of the deepest level of this attainment (at least the deepest we see in this particular episode).

And motivating Quinn and, on some level, every single character we meet in this episode, is this vision, awareness, and ultimate agreement in the truth of the State. Quinn pursues Andrea as she *knows* Andrea is the best within the company and, as evidenced by the poster/marketing, Quinn isn't alone in that thought. The awareness and ultimate belief in the rules of this game is why Denise, one of the leaders (or, as we'll find out, co-leaders) threatens Sena's professional life. If Sena can't even scrape the edges of the State then is she really dancing at a professional level?

So, at the end of the day, that's what this all is. Through the contextual lens of a sport being played by players of the highest level, it is an attempt to discuss the concepts requisite of transcendence, self-awareness, self-confrontation, and then, later confront the ultimate intangibility of true self-realization. All designed for a time where YouTube eclipses every streamer put together in terms of minutes consumed. And while this script is fundamentally the core of the piece (as all scripts are) it is still in so many ways *just* an animatic, something designed to give *just* enough to convey the essence of the motion in lieu of the piece completed.

I'll stop myself here as i've gone on far too long already but if you've made it this far, thank you. I know this is... a lot to digest but, somehow, I still think there is so much more left to discuss.

Without any further ado below please find the links to the specific repertory used in this piece.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"To watch us dance is to hear our hearts speak." - Hopi saying.

"Dancing is Life" - Stephen King

"Dance is a song of the body. Either of joy or pain." - Martha Graham

"To dance is to be out of yourself. Larger, more beautiful, more powerful." - Agnes De Mille