

Pas de Deux

by

Alex Siple

Copyright 2021

Alex Siple  
alexsimpleart@gmail.com

OPEN TO:

**INT. BALLET COMPANY CHANGING ROOM, MORNING**

MIA, a dark-haired 28-year-old, is fastidiously slipping her feet into her BALLET SHOES.

Far across the room a blonde woman, also 28, is conversing with some other ballet dancers. She pats another dancer on the shoulder; her laugh is a bell ringing around the room. This is DELILAH.

Mia narrows her eyes but does not look up from her shoes. Her side of the room is empty.

DELILAH

-yeah, I'm excited, I'm excited.

Mia stretches out the ribbons of her shoes with a violence.

DANCER 1

The waltz, though, I'm nervous-

Mia huffs to herself, rolling her eyes. She begins to wrap a ribbon around one of her shoes.

DELILAH

Don't be. Mia is going to be leading that one anyway-

Mia stops wrapping the ribbon. She doesn't look up.

DELILAH

And we've all seen her. Perfect every time.

Delilah does a little dance. Mia still doesn't move.

DANCER 2

Fan of hers, are you?

DELILAH

(laughing)

Well, yeah.

Mia abruptly pulls her ribbon as tight as she can around her foot, breathing in sharply.

CUT TO:

**INT. BALLET STAGE, AFTERNOON**

Mia is on stage, her grin pulled taut. She leads the Valse Sentimentale. She is Giselle, and she is quite good. The other lead, a nicely-built man named CRISTIANO, sets her down on the ground again before she and him leap offstage. Mia watches him throw up on the ground, her smile gone from her face the minute she steps out of the light.

MIA

Lovely.

CRISTIANO

I-

Cristiano throws up again on the ground. Everyone backstage is watching, concerned. The MANAGER, a tidy and intimidating older woman, rushes up to him.

MANAGER

Perhaps it's time for the understudy to step in for tonight.

CRISTIANO

No, give me a minute, I-

The manager steps out of the way coolly as Cristiano runs to the bathroom.

MIA

Who's the understudy again?

The manager is looking around the room as if searching for someone.

MANAGER

Actually...

MIA

Don't tell me it's Richard.

MANAGER

How about Delilah?

MIA

...What about her.

MANAGER

She could fill in for the role. It would be interesting. In fact, I saw her practicing-

MIA

No.

MANAGER

Oh?

MIA

She's not capable. She's not...

The manager raises an eyebrow at her.

MIA

I would just be uncomfortable.

The manager studies her for a moment. Mia's hands twitch.

MANAGER

Well, all right. But don't come complaining about Richard's footwork in the third act-

MIA

(turning away)

Right.

Mia jumps when she sees CARMEN, a tall, smiley person who has the look of an unhinged college professor. They are carrying piano sheet music under the crook of their arm.

MIA

Oh, it's just you.

CARMEN

Just me? Aw.

MIA

I need to fix my hair. Move it.

Carmen steps in front of Mia with every step she takes. Mia huffs and rubs her hand across her face.

CARMEN

You should've said yes to dancing with her.

MIA

You should be in the pit with the other musicians.

CARMEN

And you should be making a move-

MIA  
Goodbye, Carmen.

Mia maneuvers around Carmen, who finally relents.

As her foot falls down, we see her on stage that night, dancing the waltz again with a flourish. Every time she makes a leap, we see moments of her after the show, pulling off her costume, refusing to go to the afterparty when asked by a fellow dancer, riding the train home alone, walking on empty sidewalks to her apartment, until-

CUT TO:

**INT. MIA'S APARTMENT, NIGHT**

Mia shuts the door behind her. The music stops. The silence of the apartment is thick and abrupt. There are photos of ballets long gone in frames next to trophies; she doesn't give them a second glance as she throws her KEYS onto her kitchen counter. She stands there, not turning on the light.

Mia stares at her empty apartment. She has flashbacks to Delilah's smile, Delilah's hand on her shoulder-

She sighs deeply and turns on the light.

Mia prepares AREPAS for dinner.

MIA  
(muttering)  
Look, Mama, just like how you used to  
make it.

A clatter of her KNIFE on the plate. The NEEDLE of a record player being placed down. It's a movement from Giselle. Mia lays on her pristine couch and closes her eyes, listening with a frown. After a moment she gets up and stops the record.

CUT TO:

**INT. MIA'S BATHROOM, NIGHT**

Mia is showering. She sees SOMETHING through the shower doors in the steam. She slowly opens the SHOWER DOOR. It's only her reflection, moving around in the mirror facing her. She narrows her eyes at herself.

CUT TO:

**INT. MIA'S BEDROOM, MORNING**

Mia's eyes shoot open. She has woken up from her sleep. Her alarm starts to go off next to her.

CUT TO:

**INT. SUBWAY, MORNING**

MIA  
(on the phone)  
I had a weird dream-

Someone bumps into her. Mia shoots them a biting glare.

MIA  
What if I was holding coffee? It'd be spilled all over you right now.  
(on the phone)  
Yeah, it was like, I was onstage, in the Act 1 outfit, but then suddenly everything stopped and it was just me and this old man and I- wait, I'm forgetting what happened now.

CUT TO:

**INT. BALLET COMPANY PRACTICE ROOM, MORNING**

People are bustling about as Carmen sorts through their sheet music laying on top of a grand piano.

CARMEN  
(on the phone)  
They say people forget most of their dreams in the first five minutes after waking up.

Carmen pauses, listening to Mia. She laughs after a moment.

CARMEN  
Okay, whatever. I'm assuming that I don't have to remind you to bring me that copy of my sheet music.

CUT TO:

**INT. SUBWAY, MORNING**

Mia gets violently jostled by the train.

MIA  
Uh, I brought it to you yesterday,  
dumbass. Did you lose it again?  
(pause)  
Carmen? Ugh, the service is so bad in  
here, God-

CUT TO:

**INT. BALLET COMPANY PRACTICE ROOM, MORNING**

Mia walks in and everyone looks up. She raises an eyebrow; everyone is already dressed for the performance. Mia is unflinching.

MIA  
Are we doing another dress rehearsal?

MANAGER  
You're late, Mia.

MIA  
No I'm not. It's 10 A.M.

MANAGER  
It's a performance day, mija.

MIA  
Did we... move it up?

MANAGER  
What?

MIA  
The performance. I didn't know we  
moved the date.

MANAGER  
Are you feeling okay? Do you want some  
coffee?

MIA  
What? No. We just had a performance  
yesterday so I was confused. I'll get  
dressed. It's not an issue.

MANAGER  
Yesterday?

The manager walks up and presses a hand to her forehead.

MANAGER

Well, no fever-

DANCER 2

Could it be that Mia Rodriguez is getting *nervous*?

MIA

Oh, in your dreams, Understudy.

Mia turns away to head to the changing rooms.

DELILAH

It's okay if you are nervous, Mia!

Mia whirls around to look at her.

DELILAH

I still get jitters every time.

Mia opens her mouth and closes it, then arranges her face into a scowl.

MIA

Can't imagine the feeling.

Delilah blinks. Mia turns away again, shoes clacking against the floor.

DANCER 1

(far away)

Don't try talking to her, Delilah, I'm telling you-

Mia stops outside the doorway for a moment, then grips her bag tighter, continuing.

CUT TO:

**INT. BALLET STAGE, AFTERNOON**

Mia is beginning to dance the Valse Sentimentale during their dress rehearsal. She smiles but there is no joy in it. She eyes the male lead, Cristiano, warily as he kisses her hand.

They leap offstage again. Cristiano vomits on the ground. The music continues onstage.

MIA

You're still throwing up and you came in anyway?



CRISTIANO

What do you-

He throws up again.

CRISTIANO

I-

Cristiano throws up again on the ground. Mia stares at him, along with everyone else. The manager rushes up to press a hand to Cristiano's forehead, just as she had done before.

MANAGER

Perhaps it's time for the understudy to step in.

MIA

Uh-

CRISTIANO

No, give me a minute, I-

The manager steps out of the way as Cristiano runs to the bathroom. Mia watches him, bewildered.

MIA

He was sick yesterday and you let him dance?

The manager is looking around the room as if searching for someone.

MANAGER

Yesterday? I didn't know about that.

MIA

You don't remember?

MANAGER

What would you say to Delilah filling in for him?

MIA

What-

MANAGER

She could fill in for the role. It would be interesting. In fact, I saw her practicing-

MIA  
I told you no.

MANAGER  
You told me?

MIA  
*Yesterday.*

The manager raises an eyebrow at her.

MANAGER  
We barely spoke yesterday.

MIA  
...Is this some sort of prank? It's a very convoluted one, not even funny-

MANAGER  
What is? Mia, I don't know what you're saying.

MIA  
Yesterday. We had a performance. I'm not sure you understand-

Mia looks around and jumps when she sees Carmen, right behind her.

MIA  
God. Carmen. Tell her we had a performance yesterday.

CARMEN  
Yesterday? If there was, then I missed it. I was watching that one show all night, the one you hate-

MIA  
I'm going insane. I'm losing it.

Carmen and the manager look at her.

CARMEN  
Mia?

MIA  
I- I-

Suddenly the music onstage swells. Mia turns to look.

MIA

Can we stop that, please?

But when she turns to the manager again, there is no one there. The entire area is empty.

MIA

Okay. Yeah. Hilarious, everyone.

She stands there for a minute in silence. Things are suddenly off. The music is very loud. She hesitantly takes a step towards the stage- a crowd roars from outside. Mia startles, eyes wide. The music swells again and she walks onstage, blinded by the light for a moment. The stage is full of dancers.

Mia starts to join in on the waltz, hesitantly starting to smile. She cannot see any of the other dancers' faces. The dance is fast-paced; it feels like she is in a crowd of hundreds, but that can't be right. She dances over to where the other lead usually is, grabbing his hand-

The music stops. The room is empty. She has taken the hand of a MASKED MAN, a short, seemingly-old, cloaked figure that laughs at her.

MASKED MAN

Hello.

Mia blinks at him.

MASKED MAN

Please tell me you understand now.

Mia looks at the empty seats offstage, and blinks again. She lets go of his hand slowly.

MIA

There was- I was-

MASKED MAN

Si, si. If only you had checked the date on your phone this morning. It all would've been much quicker.

MIA

I don't-

MASKED MAN

Ah, let's dance.

He reaches out his hand again. Mia seems to come to her senses, tearing her own away from his grasp.

MIA  
What's going on.

MASKED MAN  
Oh, so you don't understand.

Mia looks around as if looking for an escape route.

MASKED MAN  
Come now. You're being so difficult.

MIA  
What drug did you put in me? Where am I right now?

The masked man looks at her in silence, amused.

MIA  
Okay. Okay.

She moves to jump offstage, but as her foot leaves the ground, she is jolted onto a stage full of music and dancers with a crowd on their feet, cheering them on.

She moves her foot back, it's quiet again. Her eyes widen.

MIA  
This is just like my dream.

MASKED MAN  
(delighted)  
I tried to tell you.

MIA  
And this- this is yesterday-

MASKED MAN  
Perhaps. Perhaps not.

MIA  
How are you doing this?

MASKED MAN  
El mundo es una caraota, y vivimos en la parte blanca.

Mia is jumping off the stage. She ignores the sudden noise of the crowd, of the stage, but the people are now all something

else, something terrible, reaching for the ends of her dress. Mia wrenches herself away, trying to get to the door. The monsters hiss her name.

MASKED MAN

You're not even going to stay and listen to my explanation?

MIA

I've got to- get out-

Mia struggles against the monsters.

MIA

Let me out!

MASKED MAN

You have to let yourself out.

MIA

What kind of bull-  
(to the monsters)  
Stop that!

A monster takes her hand and she is whisked into a dance with the monsters, being passed along up to the stage.

MIA

Why can't I stop-

She performs a gentle ending pose next to the masked man.

MASKED MAN

And here we are.

CUT TO:

INT. MIA'S BEDROOM, MORNING

Mia's sits up with a jolt, her sheets going everywhere.

MIA

No. No, no, no, no.

Mia frantically lifts up her sheets, looking for her phone. She spots it on the floor and almost falls out of bed to grab it. She checks the date- it's the same day, of course.

MIA

Ha. Ha. Hahahaha.

CUT TO:

**INT. BALLET COMPANY PRACTICE ROOM, MORNING**

Carmen is leaning against the piano, doodling something offensive on some sheet music as they lean the phone against their cheek.

CARMEN

So let's say I believe you. As a fun little theoretical exercise. In the movies, time loops are always broken when someone learns a lesson about being better person or whatever. Now, I hate encouraging your main character syndrome, but-

CUT TO:

**INT. MIA'S BATHROOM, DAY**

Mia is looking in the mirror, upset.

MIA

I'm being serious, Carmen. I don't know what to do.

CARMEN (OVER PHONE)

Normal people just call in sick when they don't want to come in to work.

MIA

Ugh. Tomorrow I'm going to go to your house and fill all your cookies with toothpaste.

CUT TO:

**INT. BALLET COMPANY PRACTICE ROOM, MORNING**

CARMEN

Oh, I've seen that video. You could do better.

MANAGER (OFF CAMERA)

Carmen, pit! Now!

Carmen grins, stacking their papers.

CARMEN

Mia, Mia. Parting is such sweet

sorrow.

CUT TO:

**INT. MIA'S BATHROOM, DAY**

MIA  
Carmen, do *not*-

Carmen hangs up. Mia groans and slams her phone onto the counter and then checks it for damage.

**INT. BALLET COMPANY CHANGING ROOM, MORNING**

Mia is twirling a tiny loose thread from her costume around with her fingers as the other ballerinas get dressed. There is a nervous air about her, but only so much that someone always paying close attention would know.

DELILAH  
Mia? You all right?

Mia looks up at her with a start.

MIA  
Why wouldn't I be?

DELILAH  
I don't know. You looked...

MIA  
Uh huh.

DELILAH  
Okay. I'll just-

She waves her hands around and gives her a smile.

DELILAH  
Good luck today.

Mia blushes slightly.

MIA  
I don't need it.

Delilah's expression is unreadable. Mia's hand twitches.

MIA  
I... Whatever.

Delilah looks pleased. Mia watches her leave in stoic silence.

She spots movement out of the corner of her eye near the lockers. She cranes her neck to look, but finds nothing.

**INT. BALLET PRACTICE ROOM, AFTERNOON**

The company is bustling with activity as preparations for the performance come into full swing. Mia maneuvers between signs and sets and dancers until she gets to Carmen's practice room. Carmen is not at the piano. Mia sighs.

ORLANDA

Mia Rodriguez.

ORLANDA, a fellow ballerina, leans against the piano, looking bored. She is in the costume of Myrtha, the antagonistic queen of Giselle. Mia bares her teeth at her.

MIA

Orlanda. What was your last name again? Rojas? Fake-Eyelashes? Worst-Pirouette-I've-Ever-Seen?

ORLANDA

Hm.

MIA

Is there a reason we're speaking right now?

ORLANDA

You really think you're hot shit.

MIA

Well, aren't I?

Orlanda saunters past Mia with a huff, and then slowly stops. Mia raises an eyebrow at her.

ORLANDA

You're gonna wake up one day and realize you've got no one.

MIA

You're gonna wake up one day and realize you should've gone to law school.

Orlanda gets in her face. Mia is unfazed.



ORLANDA

No, really, Little Miss Prima Ballerina. We all know you have no friends. You never come to the parties. You never go out for drinks. You think talent makes up for-

MIA

I'm bored of this.

She walks over to the piano stool and takes a bag of snacks out from inside with a flourish. She pops one into her mouth as she passes by a fuming Orlanda.

MIA

I'm flattered you're thinking of me, but shouldn't you be practicing or something?

Orlanda starts to say something but Mia leaves before she can hear. Carmen bumps into her on her way out.

CARMEN

No, those are mine, yours are the yellow ones. It really isn't that difficult, Mia. Wait, is that Orlanda? Did she see you take them out? That's my special hiding spot.

Carmen follows Mia around the hallways.

MIA

Oh. I got caught up in the moment.

CARMEN

(spluttering)  
The moment of what?

MIA

Nothing.

Carmen pulls Mia by the arm into a less crowded nook, her expression suddenly serious.

CARMEN

Mia. Are you-

MIA

I'm not okay. I'm stuck living the same day.

CARMEN

Yes, great, but Orlanda can be-

MIA

And I can be meaner.

She pats Carmen on the shoulder dramatically.

MIA

There, there. Your friend needs your help getting out of a magical loop and not with self esteem issues.

CARMEN

So you admit you have issues.

Mia's eye catches on Delilah, who is passing by some other dancers, laughing. Carmen raises an eyebrow at her.

CARMEN

You know what I'm going to say.

MIA

That you're going to hide your snacks in the brass section now?

Mia sees something out of the corner of her eye again. She grips Carmen's arm.

MIA

Look, there.

CARMEN

Huh?

MIA

*There.*

CARMEN

...

MIA

There's something following me.

Another something flits around the other side of them. Mia suddenly looks very afraid.

MIA

Carmen, I'm. I'm really stuck here, aren't I?

Carmen studies her, silent.

MIA

You're the only one- who am I supposed  
to-

She squats on the ground, head in her hands. The hallways  
have emptied out more, now, their small corner becoming more  
secluded.

CARMEN

Mia...

MIA

Carmen, please.

She looks up at Carmen.

MIA

I'm scared.