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ZACH SIDE

ZACH. I know. Now tell me what's not on it.

DIANA. Like what?

ZACH. Talk about yourself.

DIANA. Talk about — what?

ZACH. Tell me about the Bronx.

DIANA. What's to tell about the Bronx? It's uptown and to the right.

ZACH. What did you do there?

DIANA. In the Bronx? Mostly waiting to get out.

ZACH. What made you start dancing?

DIANA. Who knows? I have rhythm — I'm Puerto Rican.

I always jumped around and danced. Hey, do you want to know if I can act?
Gimme a scene to read, I'll act, I'll perform. But I can't just talk.
Please, I'm too nervous.

ZACH. Then relax.

DIANA. Look, I really don't mind talking ... but, I just can't be the first ... please.

ZACH. *(with an edge)* You want this job, don't you?

DIANA. Sure I want the job.

Underscore music fades out.

ZACH. All right, Diana, back in line.

*DIANA returns to the line. During the following speech the lights dim,
a spotlight moves from stage left to stage right and lights the faces of
THE LINE one at a time, in tempo, every four counts, with the music.*

ZACH. Before we do any more dancing —

No. 3

After Opening — The Line

(Orchestra)

ZACH. *(continued)* — and we will be dancing some more — let me explain something.
I'm looking for a strong dancing chorus. I need people that look terrific together
— and that can work together as a group. But there are some small parts that
have to be played by the dancers I hire. Now, I have your pictures and résumés,
I know what shows you've been in — but that's not gonna help me.
And I don't want to give you just a few lines to read. I think it would be better
if I knew something about you — about your personalities. So, I'm going to

ask you some questions. I want to hear you talk. Treat it like an interview. I don't want you to think you have to perform. I just want to hear you talk and be yourselves. And everybody just relax — as much as you can.

Music fades out as lights come up on THE LINE. SHEILA raises her hand.

END

ZACH. Sheila?

SHEILA. How many people do you want?

ZACH. Four and four.

JUDY. Forty-four?

BEBE. (to JUDY) No. Four and four.

ZACH. Four boys. Four girls.

SHEILA. Need any women?

ZACH. Okay, Mike, I'll start with you.

A spotlight picks up MIKE.

MIKE. Me? Don't you want to start at the end?

ZACH. No. I'll start with you — and relax.

MIKE. I could if you started at the end.

No. 4 Introduction: "I Can Do That"

(Orchestra)

MIKE slowly steps forward.

MIKE. (continued) What do you wanna know?

ZACH. What do you want to tell me?

MIKE. I'd like to tell you to start at the end. (He fidgets.) Ah, I can't think of a thing.

ZACH. Yes you can. Why did you start dancing?

MIKE. Oh — because my sister did. I come from this big Italian family. My grandmother was always hanging out the window, leaning on a little pillow. 'Cause that's what Italian grandmothers do — hang out windows. I was the last of twelve ... I was an accident. That's what my sister told me ... Oh ... That was the sister ...

Music continues, attacca.

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CASSIE SIDE

No. 18

"The Music And The Mirror"

(Cassie)

CASSIE. (*over music*) Well, this audition is really interesting, isn't it?

ZACH. Yeah ... What are you doing here?

CASSIE. What do you think? ... I need a job.

ZACH. In the chorus?

CASSIE. Oh, look, Zach, I'd love a part, of course, but I'll take what I can get.

ZACH. You're too good for the chorus, Cassie.

CASSIE. Too good? I did a couple of dance parts, so what?

ZACH. You were featured, you stopped two shows cold,
your career was going fine here in New York.

CASSIE. I can't get a job, Zach ... God, you sound like all my friends — my fans. Acting like I'm a star and don't know it — when the truth is I never even came close and nobody has the guts to tell me. Well, it would be nice to be a star ... But I'm not, I'm a dancer.

The lights go out, leaving Cassie in a head spot and a special.

~~CASSIE. (*continued, sung*)~~

~~Give me somebody to dance for,~~

~~Give me somebody to show.~~

~~Let me wake up in the morning to find~~

~~I have somewhere exciting to go.~~

Lights come back up.

ZACH. (*over music*) So, you're going through a slow period,
it happens to everyone. Something will happen.

CASSIE. That's what I kept telling myself in California, and I kept
telling myself that and telling myself that ... Well ...
Nothing will happen. I can't act.

ZACH. What?

CASSIE. I can't act. And there I am in California supposed to be this actress.
Well, it didn't take me long to find out I can't act ...
Didn't take Hollywood long either.

ZACH. You didn't work out there?

CASSIE. Oh, sure ... A rotten part in a so-so film — part ended up getting cut,
thank God — I was a go-go dancer in a TV movie of the week. Let's see, —
Oh, yeah — commercials, I almost got to squeeze a roll of toilet paper

End

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SHEILA SIDE

SHEILA. (*remaining in line*) Yeeees? You want me?

ZACH. Yes.

SHEILA. (*to the GROUP, but more to BOBBY*) He wants me.

ZACH. To talk.

Music in. SHEILA steps forward.

Start No. 8 Introduction: "At The Ballet"

(Orchestra)

SHEILA. (*over music*) ~~Right.~~ What do you want to know about me first?

ZACH. Try, ah, why are you in this business?

SHEILA. Well ... I wanted to be a prima ballerina. (*Grimaces at the spotlight.*)
That light ... What color is that? Do you have anything softer?

ZACH. Don't worry about the lights ... Just talk.

SHEILA. Well ... Like I said, I wanted to be a ballerina. Because my mother
was a ballerina — until my father made her give it up.

ZACH. Sheila, come downstage.

SHEILA walks downstage seductively, one step.

ZACH. (*continued*) Closer.

SHEILA. (*walks further downstage*) Can I sit on your lap?

ZACH. Do you always come on like this?

SHEILA. No, sometimes I'm aggressive ... Actually, I'm a Leo ...

ZACH. What's that supposed to mean?

SHEILA. It means the other eleven months of the year
have to watch out ... I'm very strong.

ZACH. Maybe too strong.

SHEILA. Am I doing something you don't like, I mean,
you told me to be myself.

ZACH. Just bring it down.

SHEILA. Bring what down?

ZACH. Your attitude. Tell me about your parents.

SHEILA. My parents?

ZACH. Your father.

SHEILA. Him?

ZACH. Your mother.

SHEILA. My mother ... My mother was raised like a little nun.
She couldn't go out — she couldn't even babysit.

ZACH. Sheila, don't perform ... Just talk.

SHEILA. (*in monotone*) But she wanted to be a dancer and she had all these scholarships and all that. And when she got married, my father made her give it up ... (*breaking monotone, to THE LINE*) ... Isn't this exciting? And then she had this daughter — me — and she made her what she wanted to be. And she was fabulous the way she did it ... Do you want to know how she did it?

ZACH.⁵ Yes ... But first, your hair ...

SHEILA. What? You don't like it.

ZACH. No ... Let it down.

SHEILA. (*taking the pins out*) That's what I've been trying to do.
(*SHEILA shakes her hair down.*) Better ...?

ZACH. Better ... Go on.

SHEILA. Oh, how she did it ... Well, first, she took me to see all the ballets. And then, she gave me her old toe shoes — which I used to run down the sidewalk in — on my toes — at five. And then I saw "The Red Shoes" —

The GIRLS OF THE LINE respond.

SHEILA. (*continued*) — and I wanted to be that lady, that redhead. And then, when she saw I really had to dance, she said, "You can't do it until you're eight." Well, by then, I was only six,

Music fades out.

SHEILA. (*continued*) and I said, "But I've got to dance."
(*to the GROUP*) I mean, anything to get out of the house.

ZACH. What?

SHEILA. Nothing.

ZACH. What did you say?

SHEILA. I just said that I wanted to get out of my house.

~~ZACH. Why?~~

~~SHEILA. The truth?~~

~~ZACH. Sure, you're strong enough.~~

Music in as dialogue continues.

End

⁵ See Appendix C for scene change/variation.

KRISTINE SIDE

MAGGIE, BEBE & SHEILA.

Yes, ev'rything was beautiful at the ballet.

MAGGIE. Hey! ...

BEBE. I was pretty, ...

SHEILA. I was happy, ...

MAGGIE. "I would love to ..."

MAGGIE, BEBE & SHEILA.

At ... the ... ballet.

The GROUP is back on THE LINE.

The mirror panels turn to black again. Music cadence and out.

Start

ZACH. Okay, Kristine.

KRISTINE. Oh, no — me?

AL. That's what he said.

KRISTINE. *(steps downstage)* Well, ah ... Oh. God — I don't know where to begin.

AL. Tell him how you started. *(music in)*

No. 10**Introduction: "Sing"**

(Orchestra)

KRISTINE. *(spoken over music)* Oh — Ah, well, everybody says that when I was little, every time they put on the radio, I'd just get up and start dancing. And, ah ... Oh, this man came around to my house — selling ... ah ...

AL. Lessons.

KRISTINE. Oh, and he was a terrific salesman — I'll never forget it — he put me up against this television set — it was one of those great big square things — and then he turned me around, picked up my foot and touched it to the back of my head and said, "This little girl could be a star." Well, I don't know if it was the look on my face — or the fact that I wouldn't let go of his leg — But my mother saw how much it meant to me. I mean, I watched everything on television that had dancing on it — Especially — Oh, god — every Sunday — It was, ah ... ah ...

AL. Ed Sullivan.

KRISTINE. Right — Ed Sullivan — every Sunday — like church. And, ah ... I'm sorry. It's just — I'm terribly nervous.

ZACH. That's all right. Just take a minute and pull yourself together.

AL. *(coming to KRISTINE's side)* For her — this is together.

KRISTINE. He's right. But anyway, I always knew what I wanted to do. I wanted to like be all those people in the movies. ~~Only it's funny,~~

End

BOBBY SIDE

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START

BOBBY. School? You wanna hear about school? I went to P. S. Shit ... See, I was the kind of kid that was always getting slammed into lockers and stuff like that. Not only by the students — by the teachers too. Oh, and I hated sports, hated sports. And sports were very big. I mean, it was jock city, but I didn't make one team. See, I couldn't catch a ball if it had Elmer's Glue on it. And wouldn't my father have to be this big ex-football hero? He was so humiliated, he didn't know what to tell his friends. And ...

JUMP TO BOTTOM OF PAGE*Lights dim again, leaving SINGERS in specials.*

JUDY.⁴ And ...
 God, I'm a wreck.
 God, I'm a wreck.
 I don't know where to start.
 I'm gonna fall apart.
 Where are my childhood mem'ries?
 Who were the boys?
 What were my toys?
 How will I begin?
 And why am I so thin?!!!
 What should I say?

GROUP III: VAL, RICHIE, MAGGIE, CONNIE, JUDY, DIANA & MIKE.
 What can I tell him?

JUDY. And ...

CONNIE & MAGGIE.
 And ...

RICHIE. And ...

VAL & DIANA.
 And ...

CONTINUE *Lights come back up on THE LINE. Music stops for dialogue.*

BOBBY. And my mother kept saying: "If you don't stop setting your brother on fire, we're going to have to send you away." And I was always thinking up these spectacular ways how to kill myself. But then I realized — to commit suicide in Buffalo is redundant.

*Music [bar 79] big cadence and out.***END**

ZACH. Okay, Bobby. Back in line.

BOBBY steps back in line.

ZACH. (continued) Sheila.

⁴ See Appendix B for alternate lyrics.

PAUL SIDE

He worked nights and he'd come home and he'd take us to Forty-Second Street. And we'd come out of one movie and go to another and another movie — I don't know why — but I loved musicals.

ZACH. How old were you?

PAUL. Seven or eight.

ZACH. On Forty-Second Street?

PAUL. Yeah — it was a trip.

ZACH. Go on ...

PAUL. I'd have to move down front — 'cause I couldn't see — I wear contact lenses now ... I'd move down front and these strange men would come and sit beside me and "play" with me. I never told anyone because — well, I guess it didn't matter ...

ZACH. Why didn't it matter?

PAUL. Why? Ah ... Well ...

ZACH. Look, Paul, if this is too rough for you, I have your picture and résumé ...

PAUL is now downstage center on THE LINE.

Start PAUL. ~~No. Ah ... Okay.~~ From seeing all those movie musicals, I used to dance around on the street, and I'd get caught all the time. God, it was embarrassing. I was always being Cyd Charisse ... Always. Which I don't really understand, because I always wanted to be an actor. I mean, I really wanted to perform. Once my cousin said to me, "You'll never be an actor," and I knew she was telling me this because I was such a sissy. I mean, I was terribly effeminate. I always knew I was gay, but that didn't bother me. What bothered me was that I didn't know how to be a boy.

One day I looked at myself in the mirror and said, "You're fourteen years old and you're a faggot. What are you going to do with your life?" By that time I was in Cardinal Hayes High School. There were three thousand boys there. I had no protection anymore. No homeroom where I could be charming and funny with the tough guys so they'd fight my battles for me. Like when I went to small schools. I liked school. But my grades got so bad. Even if I knew the answers to questions, I wouldn't raise my hand because I would be afraid they would laugh at me. They'd even whistle at me in the halls. It was awful ... just awful. Finally, I went down to the Principal's office and said, "I'm a homosexual." Well, it was a Catholic high school and at the age of fifteen you just didn't say that. He said, "Would you like to see a psychologist?" And I did. And he said, "I think you're very well adjusted for your age and I think you should quit school." So, I did. But I really didn't want to. I couldn't take it anymore.

End

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VAL SIDE

(ALL.)

Go to it.
Go to it.
Go to it.
Go to it.
Go to it.
Go to it.

BOYS.

And now life really begins.
And now life really begins.
And now life really begins.
And now life really begins.

GIRLS.

Go to it.
Go to it.
Go to it.
Go to it.

ALL.

Go to it.

*When the music finishes, mirrors have changed to black.
The AUDITIONERS are back on THE LINE.
LARRY is seated on ZACH'S stool, downstage right.*

Start

VAL. (*stepping forward*) So, the day after I turned eighteen, I kissed the folks goodbye — got on a Trailways bus — and headed for the Big, Bad Apple.

No. 16**“Dance: Ten; Looks: Three”**

(Val)

VAL. (*aside, to the other AUDITIONERS, after downbeat*) June Allison, right? (*continuing as before*) 'Cause I wanted to be a Rockette. Oh, yeah, let's get one thing straight. See, I never heard about “The Red Shoes,” I never saw “The Red Shoes,” I didn't give a fuck about “The Red Shoes.” I decided to be a Rockette because this girl in my home town — Louella Heiner — had actually gotten out and made it to New York. And she was a Rockette. Well, she came home one Christmas to visit, and they gave her a parade. A goddamn parade. I twirled a friggin' baton for two hours in the rain. Unfortunately, though, she got knocked up over Christmas — merry Christmas — and never made it back to Radio City. That was my plan. New York, New York, here I come. Except I had one minor problem. See, I was ugly as sin! I was ugly, skinny, homely, unattractive and flat as a pancake. Get the picture? Anyway, I got off this bus in my little white shoes, my little white tights, my little white dress, my little ugly face, and my long blonde hair — which was natural then. I looked like a fuckin' nurse! I had eighty-seven dollars in my pocket, and seven years of tap and acrobatics. I could do a hundred and eighty-degree split and come up tapping the Morse Code. Well, with that kind of talent I figured the Mayor would be waiting for me at Port Authority. Wrong! I had to wait six months for an audition. Well, finally the big day came. I showed up at the Music Hall with my red patent leather tap shoes. And I did my little tap routine. And this man said to me, “Can you do fankicks?” - Well, sure I could do terrific fankicks. But they weren't good enough. Of course, what he was trying to tell me was ... it was the way I looked, not the fankicks. ~~So I said,~~

End