

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

by

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4rd Draft
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FADE IN:

INT. WESTWICK THEATER - DRESSING ROOM -- NIGHT

A small, old fashioned dressing room. Bright bulbs surround the large vanity mirror like a marquee. A lonely chair sits vacant in front of it. In the mirror's reflection we can see New York City, circa 1948, through the window on the far wall. A partially obscured moon hangs over the city in the cloudy night sky.

The DOOR OPENS as EVA CLARKE walks in and sits down. She is dressed in a silk robe, and from the look of her hair and makeup she just got off stage. Eva stares at herself in the mirror for a moment. Classically beautiful, her face has a regal quality. She begins to slowly take her stage makeup off.

THE MAN (O.S.)

Rough night?

Eva looks up in the mirror to see a MAN, early 50s, step out from the shadows. She doesn't seem alarmed, ignores him and goes back to removing her makeup.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

What? No hello for an old friend?

The Man steps a bit closer. He gently puts his hands on her shoulders, lovingly studying her as she continues removing her makeup, without any reaction.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

You look good, doll. But you already knew that.

(smiles)

The thing about beauty though... it doesn't last forever, does it?

She looks up in the mirror and shoots him a look. The Man ignores her and admires himself in the mirror.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

(adjusts his tie)

You must think about that a lot these days. It's the only reason you still have a career.

(looks around
dismissively)

If you call this a career.

EVA

What do you want?

THE MAN

(smirks)

Aww. What's the matter, doll? Can't we just talk?

EVA

(mockingly)

I'm not in the mood for... talking.

THE MAN

Then tell me: why am I here?

EVA

Why are you here?

THE MAN

Because you want me here.

EVA

(irritated)

The only thing I want is for you to leave me alone.

THE MAN

We tried that already, remember?
Didn't work out too well for you.

(serious)

Truth is you need me.

EVA

Don't flatter yourself.

The dressing room door OPENS, diverting Eva's attention. In the reflection we see The Man take a step back and disappear into the shadows.

EVA (CONT'D)

(towards the door)

Oh, hi Frank.

The camera stays on Eva.

FRANK (O.S.)

Eva! You were terrific tonight.
Spectacular!

(beat)

These are for you.

Eva reaches over and accepts a bouquet of roses.

EVA

(smiles)

They're beautiful. Thank you.

FRANK (O.S.)

(shyly)

Listen, uh, the gang's going out for drinks in a bit. You should come. We'll celebrate!

EVA

OK, Frank. I'll be out in a minute.

FRANK (O.S.)

Swell. You take your time. I'll be right out here.

The door closes. Eva turns her gaze back to the mirror.

THE MAN

(tauntingly)

Tsk, tsk, tsk. Poor sap has no idea you got your claws in him.

Eva reflects for a moment as if there were a hint of truth in The Man's accusation.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

(smirks)

So what's this one promising you?

EVA

He's not promising me anything.

THE MAN

Doesn't it always start with dinner at the Ritz or drinks at the Coppa? Eventually he'll offer to get you a meeting with so and so, but not before you and him-

EVA

(defensively)

It's different this time.

(Beat)

Frank is a good man.

THE MAN

Oh yeah? So what does a good man want with no talent tramp like you?

Eva pauses in an attempt to recover from the blow. She looks at herself in the mirror, putting on a brave face.

EVA

They said I was great out there tonight.

THE MAN

If you were great you'd be on
Broadway, not playing this two-bit
dump.

EVA

(defiant)

Shows how little you know. Elliot
says after this run, he'll put me
in a real Broadway production.

(her eyes light up)

You hear that? Me, Eva Clarke, on
Broadway.

THE MAN

Elliot will say anything to get you
in bed.

Eva stares at the man coldly. The words sting, and it shows
on Eva's face. She wants to say something back, but can't
find the words.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

(smiles)

Then again, you know all this,
don't you?

(sinister)

Because if you know, then I know.

A single tear runs down Eva's cheek. She wipes it away and
takes a breath.

EVA

(quietly)

Get out.

THE MAN

You can do better than that.

Eva stares the man down in the mirror's reflection.

EVA

(a little louder)

Get out.

THE MAN

(menacingly)

Say it like you mean it.

EVA

(yells)

Get out!!!

The door to dressing room opens and The Man slowly retreats into the shadows.

FRANK (O.S.)
You alright in here? I heard you
scream.

The camera stays on Eva's reflection in the mirror.

EVA
(hysterical, irritated)
Just practicing some lines. I've
got a big audition next week.

FRANK (O.S.)
Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt.

EVA
(emotional)
I'll be out in a minute.

FRANK (O.S.)
Okay, Eva.

As Frank is about to close the door behind him--

EVA
(vulnerable)
Frank?

FRANK (O.S.)
Yes?

Eva hesitates for a moment. Then--

EVA
(sincerely)
I'm really glad you came tonight.

FRANK (O.S.)
(sweetly)
Sure thing. See you in a bit.

EVA
(smiles, softly)
Okay.

The door closes as Frank leaves. She looks up in the mirror, waiting for the man to reemerge from the shadows. A moment goes by. Nothing.

Eva sighs in relief and returns to taking off her makeup. The look on her face, however subtle, gives us the impression that she'll be fine.

FADE OUT.