

RAVEN AUDITION SIDE

INT. AUDITION WAITING ROOM — DAY

Raven sits alone, dance bag beside her. The room is full of dancers, but no one is really looking at her.

She touches the raven patch on her bag.

A beat.

She speaks quietly, mostly to herself. Maybe to her mother. Maybe to the room. Maybe to the girl she used to be.

RAVEN

When I was ten, I told my mother I was the only one who looked like me.

She didn't say, "That's not true."

She didn't lie.

She just looked at me in the rearview mirror like she wanted to reach through the glass and pull the whole world off my shoulders.

She said, "Who said everyone got to look like you, Raven?"

And I wanted to believe that was enough.

I did.

I wanted to believe being different was a gift.

But then you walk into enough rooms where everybody already knows where to stand, how to smile, how to take up space without apologizing...And you start learning other things.

You learn how to make your arms smaller.

You learn how to make your voice softer.

(MORE)

RAVEN (CONT'D)
You learn how to be excellent
without making anybody
uncomfortable.

My mother calls it survival.

Maybe she's right.

Maybe this is what surviving looks
like. Clean lines. Quiet face. No
extra rhythm. No extra anything.

Just enough of me to pass.
But there's this part of me...
This part that keeps moving when I
tell it not to.

My foot starts tapping. My chest
hears something. My hands remember
something I never learned.
And every time I try to stop it, it
feels like I'm leaving somebody
behind.

So I don't know what they want from
me in there.

I know what they asked for.
That's different.
(beat)

Raven touches the brooch.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
If I disappear today...
I don't think I get myself back.