

ELSON (CONT'D)

Gaps - three gaps: crotch, thigh  
and calf.

LONNIE

I know what the gaps are.

ELSON

And she has to hit the bottom of  
Rebecca's nose, minimum.

We ZOOM IN on the cover of Viva magazine, directly above  
Gemma. It features the same face that's behind reception.

ELSON

(pats his back)  
Godspeed, brother.

SCENE #1 Lonnie approaches Gemma... she looks flustered to the point  
of alarm as she realizes he's coming to talk to her.

LONNIE

Hi there. Can you stand up for me?

GEMMA

I'm sorry but I'm not leaving.

LONNIE

Just asking you to stand up.

She hesitates. As she slooowly stands, everything she's been  
rehearsing in her mind comes out in one nervous stream:

GEMMA

I spent all my savings to come out  
here. Back home, everyone says I'm  
ugly. A beanpole with mosquito  
bites, that's what they call me --

Lonnie holds his breath as she inches up to her full  
height... finally passing the nostril on the cover face. He  
breathes, glances back at Elson. He shrugs.

GEMMA (CONT'D)

-- nobody asked me to prom, I'm  
taller than every boy in my school.  
But then I read this book --

She opens the book, "Beauty by Bertie," to the dog-eared page  
that shows the height and weight chart for potential models.

GEMMA (CONT'D)

Look, see? I'm on her chart, I'm  
normal - for a model.

(MORE)

MODEL WOMAN: GEMMA PINSCHENAT

GEMMA (CONT'D)

But I can only afford one more night in New York. So I can't just let your secretary take a Polaroid and wait around for an answer. I have to see Bertie Geiss today.

Throughout this, Lonnie discreetly glances down at her gaps. Seeing the right apertures, he again glances to Elson, who gestures to the glass door. Still, he hesitates.

GEMMA

I fit in here. Even just sitting in the lobby, I look around, and for the first time in my life, I don't feel like a freak.

That strikes a chord with Lonnie.

LONNIE

Follow me.

Gemma is momentarily stunned. She picks up her duffle bag, and follows Lonnie to the door that leads into...

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INT. GEISS AGENCY - INNER OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Gemma trails Lonnie past secretary desks and groups of tables in the middle of a large, open space wreathed by rolling bulletin boards with charts and Polaroids pinned to them.

LONNIE

Two people run this agency - Bertie and Miller. They're married.

Suddenly an imposing figure in a suit and cowboy boots (MILLER, 44) BLUSTERS out of the door up ahead, yelling --

MILLER

I'm not taking this crap from some twenty year-old twit - I don't care what it costs us! Fire her ass!

He WHANGS the door shut and blows by Jill at her messy desk. Gemma looks at Jill, wide-eyed, but Jill shrugs it off.

LONNIE

That was Miller.

Another SLAMS O.S. Gemma starts like she has mild PTSD.

LONNIE (CONT'D)

He's the friendly one.

ACT THREE

SCENE #2 INT. STUDIO - DAY

Gemma poses in a low-cut couture dress, smiling like she's in a beauty pageant as a fan blows on her. "Tonight's the Night" on the stereo. PHILLIPE JUSTUS, 40s, German, stops shooting. He comes out from behind the camera, turns off the music and the fan. He approaches her in a friendly way. Gemma instinctively crosses her arms over her chest.

GEMMA

What did I do? Am I in trouble?

PHILLIPE

No, no. But you're posing. And the idea is for us to create a trust, a relationship, so that I can capture you in an authentic moment.

GEMMA

Do you want me to stop smiling? I know my teeth aren't perfect.

PHILLIPE

You're gorgeous. But you need to let down your wall.

She nods vigorously, but keeps her arms crossed.

PHILLIPE

I want you to be in your body.

He gently takes her wrists and lowers her arms. Even though she's freaking out inside, she's too scared to stop him.

PHILLIPE

I want you to swim in your own beauty, to relish it, and let me share in that, through the lens.

Gemma looks like she might cry. Like she wants to say something, to explain herself. But can't.

GEMMA

I don't know if I can do it.

PHILLIPE

You've come this far. You know you have something, you just have to let yourself go.

GEMMA

I will. I promise.

But she's on the verge of tears.

PHILLIPE  
Okay, look. Here. This can help.

He takes a mirrored pillbox out of his pocket, opens it. He takes a white pill and holds it out to her...

GEMMA  
I've never taken pills before.

PHILLIPE  
It's just to help you relax.

She still doesn't take it. He bows his head, sighs.

PHILLIPE  
I'll tell Bertie you weren't ready.

GEMMA  
Wait, no - I'll... I'll relax.

She picks up the pill... She puts it on her tongue, and swallows --

CUT TO:

INT. GEISS TOWNHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

"Rich Girl" by Hall & Oates starts as CONFETTI FALLS over...

REBECCA  
OH MY GOD!

The party is in full fizz - especially Rebecca - who is being TOASTED by a hundred GUESTS: Geiss EMPLOYEES, MODELS, Phillipe, Drew Pickett, AD EXECS and FASHION EDITORS... along with Bertie, in full-hostess mode, who takes a knife from Olga and hands it to Rebecca, who brings it down into a five-tiered cake.

AT THE HOSTED BAR - LONNIE AND MILLER

as Miller pours himself two Scotches. Lonnie sees Gemma across the room, looking like a dazed wall-flower. He looks from her to his dad, screwing up his courage.

LONNIE  
I was thinking, we should hire an office manager to help me, and I'd focus more on New Faces.

BERTIE (CONT'D)

I actually will have to work my magic on Natica, and God help me she knows all my tricks.

CUT TO:

SCENE #3 INT. GEISS TOWNHOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Gemma zips up her old yellow satin jacket and picks up her duffle bag. She steps quietly toward the door, takes one last look back - when Elson appears.

ELSON

Leaving on that midnight train to Georgia?

His smug sangfroid triggers her. She faces him, ready to lay it all out - but looking at him, she just sighs, weary.

GEMMA

I made a mistake coming here. I thought I had what it takes, that I would fit in. But I'm just as different here as I was back home.

He steps closer.

ELSON

What really happened, Gemma? At that shoot?

GEMMA

You were right, I got pushed. I did something I'm not proud of. I took something - a pill. And I'll get pushed again - and again - because that's what it takes, and I don't know where it ends.

ELSON

I've seen girls leave here before, girls who weren't proud of what they'd done. I never tried to stop them, because they weren't really walking away from anything.

GEMMA

Neither am I.

ELSON

That's where you're wrong. If you stay, if you fight it out a little longer, you're gonna be a star.

GEMMA

How do you know that?

ELSON

Because I've seen these.

He holds up a manila envelope.

ELSON (CONT'D)

Your test prints.

That gives her pause. She's tempted. She steps closer to him. He pulls the envelope back.

ELSON (CONT'D)

First, promise you'll stay.

GEMMA

What do you want from me?

ELSON

I don't know. Just, don't leave.  
Not yet. Please.

We get the feeling Elson's never said the word "please" before, and really meant it.

CUT TO:

EXT. ART GALLERY - SOHO (DOWNTOWN) - NIGHT

Graffiti on industrial steel roller doors. Steam from the street grates. A trash-can fire by a burnt-out auto-chassis. Amid the ruins, a limo parks, and Pablo opens the back door.

Bertie, in a gold hammered silk satin sarong dress with matching stole, steps onto the street and surveys the scene with distaste. Miller, in a tux, follows her.

BERTIE

This is why I never go south of  
52nd Street. My god, the only  
reason a woman would ever come down  
here is if she has a rape fantasy.

Just then a group of PUNK-ROCKERS, a mass of ripped fishnets and leather and safety pins, crosses in front of them.

PABLO

I'll keep it running.

Miller nods, then leads Bertie to the lone business on the block - the DANIEL SAVAGE GALLERY.