

THE BALLERINA, THE SHOEMAKER AND THE APPRENTICE

Written by

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. STREET - EARLY DAY 1

Gloomy day, empty street. Five or six people proceed at a steady pace. A postman on a bike pedals down the road. It is still too early for the rest of the town.

SUPERIMPOSE: Hackney, London - 1936

Quiet and still.

A noise breaks the tranquility accompanied by an angry SHOUT from the same source.

ANGRY WOMAN (O.S.)

Now bugger off! Don't you be showing your scrawny face around here again, you hear me! GET LOST!

A young man GEORGE ARKWRIGHT (19) gets thrown out of a door, he dusts off the flour and throws the apron back to the door, which shuts doubtlessly behind him.

George scoops up his messenger bag from the ground and drags himself down the street. He crosses and we can see him better - a miserably dressed little figure. His clothes are ragged and dirty. One of his shoes has a hole.

George passes by a door with a "WANTED - MEN and BOYS SHOE WORK" sign. He stops, returns to the door, and checks the signage. Above the door frame, it says "*Traynor's Shoes*". He looks at his tattered shoe. He knocks (Because why not).

*
*

2 INT. STAGE - NIGHT 2

A pair of women's feet in ballet pointe shoes step into the frame.

3 INT. WORKSHOP FRONT ROOM - DAY 3

George pushes the door open and walks into the room. It is a place he's never seen. The walls are filled with shelves, the shelves are stacked with various fabric materials, and rows after rows of finished and unfinished pink ballet pointe shoes.

*
*
*
*
*

The shop owner DAVID TRAYNOR (45), a stern, rough looking man, comes out of the back room and sees George.

*
*

George is mystified by the workshop in front of his eyes. This is not something he'd expected to get into.

INTERCUT BETWEEN THE WORKSHOP AND THE STAGE

The feminine figure dances the "Giselle variation ACT II".

Mr. Traynor's work bench is neatly arranged with tools and molds. George watches in shock (What the heck is this place?).

*

A3

INT. WORKSHOP BACKROOM - DAY

A3

*

A few days have passed. Mr. Traynor is working on one ballet pointe shoe. George is put to watch by his side, his eyes wander around, he bumps into a piece of equipment and knocks over some tools.

An unfinished shoe is tightly positioned on a mold.

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Mr. Traynor pulls the fabric towards the center of the shoe and creates tiny folds. He uses glue and scissor to secure and cut off the extra material. He hammers the block, it sounds solid.

INTERCUTS ENDS as the doorbell rings.

Mr. Traynor gestures George to go. A postman drops off a bunch of mail. *

George comes back with the mail and opens one of them. He retrieves the content - a neatly filled out order sheet, with column names such as VAMP, INSOLE, BOX, etc. *

GEORGE
(reads to himself)
Emily Vanu...Vanuxem, ten pairs.

George writes it down on a note pad and files the order sheet to a designated place.

George opens another mail and retrieves the order sheet.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Sylvia Karaaaa....Keralli. Mr.
Traynor, have you met them?

Mr. Traynor doesn't answer.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
They are quite pretty, aren't they?
Dancing on their toes in ... white
dresses.

MR. TRAYNOR
Tutus.

GEORGE
You've seen 'em dance in these,
haven't you?

George picks up a pair of pointe shoes.

MR. TRAYNOR
Put them back.

GEORGE
(excited)
Blimey! You hav...

MR. TRAYNOR
I reckon you'd like to stay here a
bit longer than the other places.

George nods nervously.

MR. TRAYNOR (CONT'D)

Then take the shoes out of the oven.

Mr. Traynor's glasses hang low on the nose. George obliges.

4	EXT. WORKSHOP FRONT ROOM PATIO - DAY	4	*
	Mr. Traynor and George eat sandwiches next to each other on a bench. George stretches his legs and tries to point his toes. He instantly gets a cramp in his foot.		
5	INT. WORKSHOP BACK ROOM - DAY	5	*
	Mr. Traynor hammers the box of a shoe.		
	George tries his best to paste layers of fabrics on the front of a shoe, it's inevitably a mess, the glue gets everywhere and the shoe is basically ruined. He throws it to the side.		*
	GEORGE		
	Damn.		
	George hammers the box of a shoe as well but hits his fingers. Mr. Traynor sighs as George groans.		
6	INT. WORKSHOP FRONT ROOM - DAY	6	*
	End of the work day, George, carrying his messenger bag, walks past Mr. Traynor, who is standing on a ladder.		*
	MR. TRAYNOR		*
	Let's see, three more days?		*
	George nods, and walks out of the shop.		*
A6	EXT. WORKSHOP ENTRANCE - DAY	A6	*
	George looks quite discouraged and he notices that the "HELP WANTED" sign is still on the door.		*
7	EXT. STREETS/THEATRE - NIGHT	7	
	George strides down the streets after dark, he is surrounded by lights and shops.		

He passes by a theatre, a poster catches his attention - a ballerina standing on her toes in fifth position with her hands crossed at her chest, she wears a long white romantic tutu and a veil. It's a poster of the ballet GISELLE.

A TICKET BOY (23) hands out flyers of the ballet to the passersby.

TICKET BOY
"Giselle" tickets on sale! Need one
of these sir?

He shovels a flyer into a passersby's hand. He notices George.

TICKET BOY (CONT'D)
Hey young lad, take one.

George accepts a copy.

8 INT. GEORGE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

8

George shuts the door - a tiny, sparse room. *

He retrieves some coins from his chest pocket, shillings and pence. He drops them all in his money can creating the tinkering sound.

He sits at the edge of the 'BED', a pad on the floor more or less, and takes out the flyer from the pocket. It's a mini poster of the one in front of the theatre. He puts it next to the money can with the picture facing down.

He takes off his miserable looking pair of shoes. He looks at his money can before he lies down.

9 INT. WORKSHOP FRONT ROOM - DAY

9 *

George is still a disaster at work.

MR. TRAYNOR

Let me show you something.

Mr. Traynor presents a female foot model to George.

MR. TRAYNOR (CONT'D)

Every foot is different, to make a pair of fitting shoes for the girls, we ought to understand their feet. Look at this one for example...

10 INT. STAGE/WINGS - DAY

10

SYLVIA KERALLI (25), dressed in rehearsal apparel, puts on her pointe shoes.

MR. TRAYNOR (V.O.)

Her toes are lean but not too long, her first three toes are almost of the same length - quite appropriate for pointe work, it affects the shape and the width of her platform and her box.

Sylvia arches her foot to test out the fit.

MR. TRAYNOR (V.O.)

The sole of her foot is very curved and her instep is very high - nice arch, then we can measure her shank and her vamp.

Sylvia stands on her pointe, her arched feet create beautiful lines to her long legs.

George enters the wings, carrying a few packaged shoeboxes.

MR. TRAYNOR (V.O.)

And the shape of her heel is absolutely important, if the heel's too long or too short, she'll slip off when she's en pointe.

George is quite lost in this big theatre, but Sylvia's presence takes his breath away. Sylvia comes to the corner of the stage close to George, their eyes meet, Sylvia smiles at George who looks away immediately.

JERRY (O.S.)
May I help you, boy?

The theatre manager JERRY BELLAMY (48) spots this unfamiliar presence of George.

GEORGE
Mr. Traynor sent me to deliver the shoes.

Jerry looks at the handful of shoeboxes George is holding.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
It's George, by the way.

JERRY
Put them here. How long have you worked for David?

GEORGE
Only a couple of weeks.

JERRY
How is he?

GEORGE
He's quite well.

George steals looks at Sylvia.

JERRY
I hardly remember the last time he came by to see a show.

GEORGE
Mr. Traynor used to go to the BALLET?

JERRY
GISELLE was his favourite piece.

*

11 INT. GEORGE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

11

George drops a few more coins inside the money can and picks up the ballet flyer that was flipped over.

The girl in the poster resembles the one he saw on the theatre stage.

George looks for the writing and spots SYLVIA KERALLI next to the role of Giselle.

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GEORGE
Sylvia Keralli...

12 INT. WORKSHOP BACK ROOM - DAY 12 *

George looks through the order sheet and finds Sylvia's. He reads her measurements from top to bottom and begins to work on her order.

Even though his hands are still clumsy, he is slowly getting it.

He is able to glue the fabrics together with only a little bit of mess. He hammers the box of the shoe, cautiously.

Mr. Traynor notices the improvement.

George puts the half finished shoes neatly next to each other on the shelf, in preparation for their next steps. As we stay with the shoes for a few more seconds, they start to change in quality - they no longer have messy glue stains and ugly shapes. *

George's hand comes into the frame and grabs the shoe - which brings us to... *

A12 INT. WORKSHOP BACK ROOM - DAY [THREE MONTHS LATER] A12 *

George brings the unfinished shoe to Mr. Traynor. Mr. Traynor inspects and nods.

MR. TRAYNOR

Let's finish it, about time eh?

Mr. Traynor cleans up the extra materials and sews the elastic strings along the edges. He hammers around different areas of the shoes and finally one beautiful pink satin pointe shoe is made.

George admires the finished work and is about to continue with the other shoes.

MR. TRAYNOR (CONT'D)

Hang on.

Mr. Traynor opens the bottom drawer and takes out a box from inside. He opens it, there are a bunch of metal rods, each is about five inches long. Mr. Traynor picks up one of them. There is a tiny engraved 'ANCHOR' on one end.

MR. TRAYNOR (CONT'D)

Each shoemaker marks his product with a unique symbol. Though good work is celebrated, mistakes are not easily forgotten. I take pride in mine, the 'anchor'.

*
*

Mr. Traynor hammers his 'anchor' symbol on the bottom of the sole.

MR. TRAYNOR (CONT'D)

Each of the symbol belongs to a great maker in the past. And our job is not to ruin their names.

Mr. Traynor looks into the box and searches among the rods.

MR. TRAYNOR (CONT'D)

What should you have...

As he searches, Mr. Traynor finds something buried beneath the rods, he takes it out. It is a GISELLE playbill, from many years ago. On its cover, a beautiful ballerina stands in fifth position en pointe, with hands crossed at her chest.

He stares at the ballerina and is lost in thought.

GEORGE

Mr. Traynor. Mr. Traynor (louder).

Mr. Traynor is pulled back to the reality.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I don't think I'm ready to have one.

Seeing Mr. Traynor and the way he holds the old GISELLE playbill in his hand, something has made sense in George's mind.

13

INT. THEATRE BACKSTAGE - DAY

13

George delivers more new shoes to the theatre. Sylvia rehearses on stage, he puts the boxes down and watches at the wing.

JERRY

She's lovely, isn't she?

George nods.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Tonight is her last GISELLE this season.

George's eyes open wide, as if that's the most frightening things he's heard.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Hurry up!

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14 INT. GEORGE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 14

George pushes the door open and goes for his money can. He tries to see how much he has saved but it's too dark, he pours out the entire can.

MATCH CUT TO:

15 EXT. THEATRE BOX OFFICE - NIGHT 15

A pool of coins on the ticket window.

GEORGE
One please.

The ticket lady collects the coins and begins the endless counting. The focus slowly shifts to a little notice above the office window.

THE NOTICE SAYS:

CAST CHANGE
"EMILY VANUXEM TO REPLACE SYLVIA
KERALLI IN THE ROLE OF GISELLE"

GEORGE
Wait! Isn't Sylvia dancing tonight?

TICKET LADY
She got injured at the rehearsal
today.

GEORGE
But I just saw her this
afternoon...

TICKET LADY
Here's the ticket. Enjoy the show,
dear.

16 INT. THEATRE - NIGHT 16

George finds his seat and stares at the closed, gigantic theatre curtains, he seems very nervous.

[ON GEORGE ONLY] The music begins, it is played beautifully. His eyes light up when the curtain opens, he is deeply moved by the dance, but when the Giselle entrance music starts to play, the huge disappointment is written on his face.

George eventually leaves his seat and exits the audience before the performance ends.

17 EXT. THEATRE - NIGHT 17

George walks out of the theatre. Disappointed.

18 INT. WORKSHOP BACK ROOM - NIGHT 18 *

George opens the workshop. A long night in ahead. *

He has to check his notes once in a while. His handwork is not as deftly as that of Mr. Traynor's, apparently, but it is with a great deal of dedication and determination. *

A series of shots of making a pair of shoes from scratch. Pulling fabrics and securing them around the mold, gluing, hammering, sewing, final touch. Finally, George finishes making his first pair of ballet shoes.

A18 EXT. STREET - EARLY DAY A18 *

George packages the shoes in a box and leaves the shop. It's already early morning.

19 INT. THEATRE - MORNING 19

George arrives at the theatre again. There are only a few theatre employees and janitors cleaning up after last night.

He holds the nicely wrapped box walks to the stage.

JERRY (V.O.)

George!

Jerry notices George from the stage.

George approaches the stage and presents Jerry with the shoebox.

GEORGE

Would you give these to Sylvia?

Jerry takes the shoe box and opens it. He notices there isn't a maker symbol on the bottom of the sole.

JERRY

You made THESE?

George nods.

GEORGE
Can she still dance?

Jerry shrugs.

JERRY
Hard to tell. One moment they shine
like a star, the next moment they
struggle to walk again. *

George and Jerry both sink into silence.

Jerry gestures - "I will take care of this".

George leaves.

JERRY (CONT'D)
What about DIAMOND?

GEORGE
Pardon?

George turns around.

JERRY
A diamond, as your maker symbol.
You can't hide in the rough
forever, lad.

George smiles and leaves.

20 INT. WORKSHOP FRONT ROOM - DAY

20 *

A diamond symbol is hammered on a newly made pointe shoe.

SUPERIMPOSE: ONE YEAR LATER

George is the one holding the rod. He and Mr. Traynor are
working together in the shop.

The door bell rings.

Mr. Traynor goes to get the door. He sets some mail on
George's workbench. *

George opens the mail from the top of the pile, he logs the
order. Among the same pile of mail, one is buried quietly
underneath, waiting to be discovered. *

The sender name is: Sylvia Keralli.

CUT TO BLACK.