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AT RISE: A near empty backlot sound stage—save for a couple of lighting pieces, a rolling wardrobe with costumes, etc., and a director’s chair. LANA TABOR, in victorian garb, is huddled over an imaginary body, holding a bloody and broken arrowhead in the woods.

LANA
(affecting British accent)

“Wilson Napier! Don’t you dare die on me! No! You son of a bitch...I love you, you fool! Breath, breath!”

Suddenly she breaks character and starts plunging the arrowhead into the “body” repeatedly.

Ugh! I hate you, I hate you, I hate you and your stupid stinky breath!

BRUNO PARKER appears out of the darkness with a camera and light meter around his neck and rushes to her, gently removing the arrowhead from her hand.

BRUNO

Lana, Lana, no, no, no!

(then softly)

Stop, stop. Easy now...

(cradling his arms around her and pulling the knife out of her hands, then gently—)

There you go...

Lana looks up at him.

BRUNO

(tsk, tsk)

We both know that’s not in the script.

LANA

I don’t know what came over me...please forgive me, Bruno...

BRUNO

Of course, of course. So long as you know you can’t stab the real Oliver Bainesworth twenty-four times, right?

LANA

It's how I emotionally prepare.

BRUNO

By imaginarily slaughtering actors you don't like?

LANA

It purges me.

BRUNO

This isn't a slasher movie.

LANA

They hailed it as an artsy slasher movie.

BRUNO

(back to his lighting)

Well, hey, we're being hailed.

LANA

Because it has Mr. British Artsy Fancy Pants.

BRUNO

Oliver Bainesworth has star power, Lana. Also, Betty Napier was not a murderer.

LANA

But are we sure about that?

BRUNO

Tell me you haven't been playing it that way the whole time?

LANA

That is an actor's secret choice, Bruno.

BRUNO

I'm overstepping, my apologies.

LANA

You have to trust the process. I once gained thirty pounds for a role.

BRUNO

Really?

LANA

It was wonderful to eat all the chocolate with purpose.

BRUNO

Lana, Betty Napier did not murder her husband. It's based on a true story.

LANA

Does it have to be?

BRUNO

It's got a Wikipedia page.

LANA

But there's a popular legend—

BRUNO

(suddenly defiant)

No! He died in the woods that night, by an arrow to the heart. There's no urban legend, Lana. Wilson Napier does not live on.

He goes back to moving a light, setting the scene, framing it up with the camera around his shoulder.

LANA

His breath stinks.

BRUNO

Well, so did Clark Gable's, legend has it. And he didn't give a damn, either.

LANA

And he told Carol I'm a terrible actress.

BRUNO

You, my love, are going to be a household name after this premiere.

LANA

Oh, one more thing—

BRUNO

(trying to set up)

And this hits just keep on coming...