

THE DRESS

Written by

Amanda Jane Stern

amandajanestern@gmail.com
(917) 514-0638

FADE IN:

EXT. NYC BRIDAL BOUTIQUE - DAY

A luxe New York City bridal boutique. From the outside the place seems still, serene. White gowns are prominently displayed in the window.

Large glass windows and bright lights invite passersby to ooh and aah at the bridal gowns. A light pink awning hangs over the top, letting you know, this is a ladies' shop.

INT. BRIDAL DRESSING ROOM - DAY

The dressing room is adorned in pink and white. A white chair sits off to one side. Prints of Barbie Doll-esque women in haute couture wedding gowns hang on the walls.

The lighting is soft, not fluorescent. It creates a dreamy glow in the room.

A couple of wedding dresses hang on racks on the wall.

BECCA SHAPIRO (late 20s) steps into a dress with the help of JENNIFER BREWER (40s-50s), a bridal stylist. Becca finishes stepping into the dress and Jennifer brings it up and clips it in the back to keep it in place.

The dress has a deep v-neck, an A-line cut and is decorated with slews of 3D flowers or petals. Becca's breasts threaten to pop out of the deep plunging neckline.

She looks at herself in the mirror. She takes a deep, pointed breath.

She studies her reflection.

Jennifer watches her, studying every slight movement.

JENNIFER

It's definitely a lot of dress. I
can tell you're not feeling it.
Should we go show your mother?

She twists the engagement ring around her finger.

BECCA

Let's do it.

Jennifer opens the dressing room door. She picks up the train of the dress and leads Becca out and down the hall.

INT. BRIDAL STORE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The hallway separates the private dressing room from the viewing room. Save for a rack of dresses to return to the showroom, the hallway is empty.

Jennifer and Becca walk down the hallway as fast as they can, though the weight of the dress weighs down on Becca.

INT. BRIDAL VIEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They enter into the viewing room which is split into different sections. Each section has a 3-part mirror around a riser. A couch sits facing the riser and the mirrors.

A few dresses hang on the walls as display, though this is not the showroom so it's only a couple carefully selected pieces. Veils also adorn the walls.

On one couch sits HELEN SHAPIRO (60s), Becca's mother.

Becca and Jennifer approach the riser and Jennifer helps Becca step on.

She walks over to stand in front of the mirror.

Helen stays in her seat and looks at the dress. She pulls a face.

HELEN

It definitely doesn't fit you.

JENNIFER

No, of course it's not the right size. We only carry samples in the store, the actual dress would be made to measure.

HELEN

I just feel like I can't get as good a sense if it's so ill-fitting.

Becca plays with her engagement ring. Helen notices.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Stop doing that or it's going to fall off and you'll lose it.

Becca stops fidgeting with the ring.

She looks at herself in the mirror. She breathes in measured breaths to keep herself calm.

JENNIFER
What do you think, Becca?

BECCA
I don't really think it's me.

JENNIFER
What's not working for you?

Becca readjusts the dress to get more comfortable.

BECCA
It's a lot.

JENNIFER
It's overwhelming you?

BECCA
Yeah.

Helen looks around the room, her eyes land on a dress on the wall. This dress is a traditional, lace wedding dress with long lace sleeves and a square neckline. She stares at the dress and zones out.

JENNIFER
So I think we can all agree that this is not the dress for you?

BECCA
Definitely.

Becca looks to her mother for approval.

BECCA (CONT'D)
Mom?

Helen is still transfixed by the dress.

Becca's eyes follow where her mother is staring and she sees the dress. Her eyes widen. She looks back at her mom.

Jennifer brings Helen out of her trance.

JENNIFER
Mom? Do you agree?

Helen snaps out of it.

HELEN
What?

JENNIFER
This is not the dress.

HELEN
No, definitely not.

JENNIFER
Great, We'll be right back.

Jennifer leads Becca back out of the viewing room.

INT. BRIDAL DRESSING ROOM - FOLLOWING

Becca and Jennifer walk back into the dressing room.

Jennifer helps Becca out of the dress and into the provided pink, silk changing robe.

JENNIFER
Ok, let's talk a bit more. You said this wedding is next spring?

BECCA
Yeah. We wanted to do something small and intimate at first, but between our families alone that wasn't really possible.

JENNIFER
How many guests?

BECCA
250. It's at an old museum that they turned into an event space. My parents are paying, we can't pay for that.

JENNIFER
Who's performing the ceremony?

BECCA
My childhood rabbi. My parents insisted on a traditional Jewish wedding.

JENNIFER
Ok. I want you to do me a favor. Go look at the dresses we have picked and tell me which one, if any, actually speaks to you.

Becca nods. She walks over to the wall and studies the dresses that have been pulled for her to try on.

She feels the fabric of one satin dress. The skirt is a champagne satin, there is a beaded bodice up top.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Is that one speaking to you?

BECCA

I like the fabric of the skirt, I don't really like the beading.

JENNIFER

Do you think you might want something more lightweight? With less decoration?

BECCA

Yeah. That could be good.

Jennifer thinks a moment.

JENNIFER

Ok. There's a dress that we have in the store that I think might be right. I'll go pull it.

Jennifer exits the room.

Becca continues to study the dresses.

She fidgets with her ring, but it won't spin on her finger. She twists it hard but it won't budge.

She looks down at her left hand and notices that it has turned a shade of blue reminiscent of a corpse.

She stares at her hand and begins to feel faint.

She sits down in the dressing room chair. She takes deep, measured breaths.

She looks at her hand again, it is normal.

She twists her ring and it easily moves this time.

Jennifer re-enters the room, a garment bag in hand.

She takes the dress out of the bag and hangs it on the wall.

This dress is a silk-satin champagne slip dress with a bias cut. Simple, elegant, clean.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

What do you think?

Becca walks over to the dress. She feels the material.

BECCA
It's really pretty.

JENNIFER
You wanna try it on?

BECCA
Yeah.

Jennifer helps Becca slip the dress over her head.

As they get the dress on, they continue to talk.

JENNIFER
Tell me about your fiancé. What's
he up to today?

BECCA
They're helping their brother
apartment hunt today. I really wish
they were here, but my mom insisted
it should be a mother-daughter
thing.

Becca studies herself in the mirror. The dress fits almost
like a glove, hugging against each of Becca's curves.

Jennifer watches Becca.

JENNIFER
You have the perfect figure for
this. It so perfectly highlights
your curves.

Becca loosens up, she almost even smiles, her breathing
becomes less forced.

BECCA
It's pretty comfortable. It's not
so overwhelming.

JENNIFER
They can sew in a bra as well of
course.

BECCA
Ok.

JENNIFER
What do you think your mom is going
to say?

BECCA

Honestly? I don't think she's going to like it.

JENNIFER

Right. Let's see what we can do.

INT. BRIDAL VIEWING ROOM - FOLLOWING

Helen continues to stare at the wedding dress across the room.

Jennifer and Becca enter. Becca is noticeably more comfortable in this dress. She feels herself.

Becca steps up onto the riser and looks in the mirror. As this dress has no train, she can move around in it without Jennifer's help.

Helen looks away from the dress and looks at Becca.

She studies the dress she's wearing.

HELEN

It looks more like a nightgown to me than a wedding dress.

Becca remains silent, she continues to study herself in the dress.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I don't know. Is this really a dress for you. I feel like it's for someone tall and really skinny.

Becca's face falls though she tries to hide it.

JENNIFER

I think her figure looks lovely in it. Women kill for her curves.

HELEN

I just don't think it's cut for her.

BECCA

I actually like it. It's comfortable, I can move in it.

HELEN

I just don't think it's special enough for a wedding dress.

(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)

Maybe a cocktail party, but not for a bride. It's not what I'd wear.

Becca bites hard on her bottom lip to stop herself from blurting out "it's not your wedding." She sucks in a deep breath.

She reaches to fidget again with her ring, but quickly stops herself when Helen's eyes shoot downwards.

They fall into an uncomfortable silence.

Helen gets up and walks over to the dress she's been eyeing.

She pulls it and walks it back over to Becca and Jennifer.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I like this.

BECCA

Mom, that's so traditional.

HELEN

You're having a traditional wedding, Becca. You're not standing under the chuppah in that nightgown. I can see your nipples in it. I won't pay for it.

Jennifer takes the traditional gown from Helen.

JENNIFER

I'll take this to the dressing room. Becca, you want to go back?

BECCA

Yeah.

HELEN

Just try it on, for me. Please.

INT. BRIDAL DRESSING ROOM - FOLLOWING

Becca sits on the chair in the dressing room. She still wears the slip dress. She fidgets with her ring.

The dress that Helen likes hangs prominently on the wall.

JENNIFER

I can see that she wants to make this her wedding.

Becca nods.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

What do you want to do? Do you want me to step out for a minute and you can call your fiancé?

BECCA

No. I'll tell them later.

JENNIFER

Ok. What do they want in terms of this wedding?

BECCA

They don't really care, they'd be happy just to elope. Honestly, so would I.

JENNIFER

I don't blame you.

Becca tugs at her ring. Again it's stuck.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

How can I help you get through this?

BECCA

I don't know. Can you give my mother a new personality?

Jennifer looks at Helen's pick.

Becca's eyes follow her. She studies the dress. It is everything she doesn't want, traditional, constricting, it can seemingly stand on its own without needing a wearer to hold it up.

Becca looks closer, if she's not mistaken she can notice the ends beginning to yellow, almost decay. She blinks and the dress looks pure white again.

JENNIFER

Hear me out. What if you try it on to appease her. Maybe seeing how much you don't like it will help her realize this is your wedding.

Becca stares at the dress.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

You don't have to say yes, but it could help.

Becca thinks a moment longer.

INT. BRIDAL VIEWING ROOM - FOLLOWING

Becca and Jennifer enter the viewing room. Becca is wearing the dress that Helen picked. It is clear she wants nothing more than to climb out of it and burn it.

The weight of the dress hangs heavy on her frame. She can't move in the dress without Jennifer's assistance because of the full skirt and long train.

Helen watches them enter. She smiles from ear-to-ear.

Jennifer helps Becca onto the platform.

Becca can hardly even look at herself in the mirror.

HELEN

Now that's a wedding gown. Don't you feel like a princess?

Becca looks up at herself. She makes eye contact in the mirror with Helen.

BECCA

I don't want to feel like a princess.

HELEN

Nonsense. Every girl wants to feel like a princess on her wedding day. This is special. This screams wedding. I think this is the dress.

BECCA

I don't.

Helen bolts up from her seat.

HELEN

Oh, wait.

Helen runs over to the wall and grabs a long veil.

She runs it back over to Becca and places it on her head, she covers her face with the traditional veil.

She stands behind Becca and looks into the mirror with her.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Now doesn't that feel bridal?

Becca stares into the mirror.

In her reflection her left hand has once again turned the color of a corpse. Her arm hangs heavy, limp.

Yellowing signs of decay begin to creep up the dress.

Helen's broad smile begins to take on a sinister quality.

Becca's breaths grow shorter and more rapid as she struggles against the confines of the dress.

In voiceover the sound of a Rabbi reciting the Seven Blessings overtakes the room.

RABBI (V.O.)

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech
 ha-olam, asher bara sason v'simcha
 chatan v'kallah, gilah rinah ditzah
 v'chedvah, ahavah v'achavah
 v'shalom v'reut. M'hera Adonai
 Eloheinu yishammah b'arei Yhudah uv-
 chutzot Y'rushalayim kol sason
 v'kol simcha, kol chatan v'kol
 kalah, kol mitzhalot chatanim
 meichupatam u-n'arim mimishte
 n'ginatam. Baruch ata Adonai,
 m'sameiach chatan im hakalah.

As the prayer continues it gets louder and louder mixing with a distinct buzzing hum.

Finally Becca screams.

BLACKOUT