

NUTCRACKER DADS

Caleb Stenzinger

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

JERRY and GARY, two dads with thick Chicago accents sit with snacks and beers. Nutcracker "March" plays over the scene.

JERRY

There she is! Go on Tiffany! That's my girl. You dance that freakin' Nutcracker.

GARY

Let's go, Abigail. Make daddy proud. Go Nutcracker!

They sit back down and swig some beer.

GARY (CONT'D)

Pretty good squad we got this year.

JERRY

Yeah, pretty good squad.

GARY

I was a little worried when they brought in that new coach from Milwaukee last year, but Ms. Amy knows what's up. Really pushing that Vaganova technique. I'm tired of all this Balanchine bullshit.

JERRY

I caught a couple scrimmages a few weeks ago. She was really whipping them into shape. Tiffany puked three times.

GARY

You know what they say. Leave it all on the stage.

JERRY

Oh, it was all over the stage.

They bite into their hotdogs.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Is that Tanner kid wearing a cup? That's gotta be a cup.

GARY

I don't know. What I do know is that his *relevé* is sloppy, he's not spotting his *pirouettes*, and he's gonna *grand battement* that mouse in the face.

JERRY

Man, you gotta love big-ass mice, though.

GARY

Gotta love big-ass mice. Man, I've been a Mouse King fan ever since I saw the freakin' Nutcracker in '96.

JERRY

With Hendrickson as Mouse King?! Me too! Dragged my girlfriend to the freakin' Nutcracker Junior year. Hendrickson, man.

GARY

Yeah, he killed it.

JERRY

Hendrickson was a beast. We're not gonna see a Mouse King like that in this town again.

They raise their beers in tribute, then chug.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Oh there's another fall! Down goes Drosselmeyer.

GARY

Count it!

JERRY

What was the over-under on falls this year?

GARY

23. We're at 7 now. But still a couple movements before half time.

JERRY

I took the over. I'm betting big on Sugar Plum.

GARY

Good call. Our Sugar Plum Fairy sucks this year.

(MORE)

GARY (CONT'D)

Ten bucks says she tries *pigués* to *coupé jetés* and falls out after two.

JERRY

You're on. Damn first we gotta wait through those stupid Chinese and Russian *divertissements*.

GARY

Don't remind me. Can't believe my daughter's a dirty commie again.

They munch on handfuls of popcorn.

JERRY

I know we're in a rebuilding year, and Ms. Amy's doing what she can with the team she's got, but surely there was a better choice for Clara than this Meyers girl.

GARY

Oh you didn't hear? Maddy Meyers is Ms. Amy's niece.

JERRY

Oh come on! Are you serious? It's the freakin' Nutcracker! Clara is the glue that holds this whole story together! She's the emotional core! You gotta have a versatile performer with a subtle innocence who can turn into a fierce warrior in the battle against the big-ass mice! You can't just throw that out to anyone with a leotard!

GARY

Yeah, and just look at those feet.

They shudder.

JERRY

You know my oldest Cindy was Clara--

GARY

--was Clara in '09. Yeah yeah we know. But let's not forget my Amanda woulda had that part if she wasn't sidelined by that brutal ingrown toenail.

JERRY

Oof, horrible injury.

They both shake their heads remembering.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Well either way, we can both agree this Meyers girl woulda played third string to both our girls. I mean, look at her turnout.

GARY

Amateur. You gotta want it, Maddy! Keep that foot in fifth position all the way through the *developpé*. What is this, La La Land?

JERRY

Nope, it's the freakin' Nutcracker!
(to Gary)
If you're not poised for a hip replacement by 28, you're not doing ballet right.

They munch on more popcorn.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Oh hey, looks like the toy soldiers are moving into a 'T' formation. Could be setting up for something big here.

GARY

Spreading into the V formation. Freakin' Nutcracker's gettin ready.

JERRY

Oh shit, this is it.

GARY

Yes. Come on, baby. Open up in the backfield. Let's see some big-ass mice.

JERRY

Boom! There he is! Mouse Kiiiiing!

They jump up and high five.

BOTH

Mouse King! Mouse King! Mouse King!

Blackout.