

Cornelia knocks against the door frame waiting for Professor Ledie, the project lead, to notice her. The box full of carefully placed materials digs into her hip painfully as she stands just outside the room. She almost knocks again, her excitement quickly turning to nerves, when the professor finally notices her.

The older woman smiles pleasantly, but without recognition, "Come in."

Cornelia straightens ~~her spine~~ as she marches in, gently placing the large box on the seat in front of Ledie ~~and~~, taking a spot behind it. "I've come to request the position of ~~L~~Lead ~~s~~Set ~~d~~Designer for *Next to Normal*. Professor Cain told us that Bernard lost the position after failing to turn in a finalized design and that it was up for grabs," Cornelia begins to unpack her box, placing three separate folders ~~beside each other~~.

"I understand that because of this, the entire department is struggling to come up with the estimated budget report for set creation, and that it needs to be turned in by tomorrow for approval. I've created my own budget and design based on what I've overheard in the ~~D~~irector's meetings."

Ledie frowns, even as she pulls the folders close to examine them, "I'm sorry, I don't remember seeing you in any of my classes this semester. ~~C~~ean you remind me of your name?"

"I haven't taken any of your courses yet. My name is Cornelia Fogwell. I'm a freshman." As she introduces herself, Cornelia carefully extracts ~~the a~~ diorama from the box, careful to keep any of the loose pieces from falling out. "I created this to help more visual learners understand what my goal was for the set. I wasn't sure what kind of presentation would impress you more but ~~---~~"

"Cornelia, the position is only open for upper-classmen," Professor Ledie interrupts as she places the folder back down. "Not that your work isn't impressive, but lead positions can only go to students that have taken the workshops and passed the courses associated with them. As teachers, we just don't know underclassmen enough to put them in leading roles."

~~I~~gnoring the horrid drop in her stomach, Cornelia powers on, "I'm aware ~~of this~~, but I thought ~~that~~, because of the work I have done before, ~~that~~ an exception could be made."

The professor shakes her head, "I haven't seen any of your work before today."

Cornelia laughs nervously, her hands going to pick at the loose thread on her shirt, "Of course you have, I helped Sid create the lighting grid last month. He used my shorthand method when he created the cue sheet."

"He never mentioned your name, or that he had any help," ~~L~~edie starts to go through her files, "I did notice he used a new format. ~~---~~; it was more concise than ~~what~~ he usually turns in. Did you make sure to initial any of the paperwork so that you got credit?"

"Well no, I don't think he ever asked me to sign anything, but I helped complete the project on time. ~~I've also been co-leading the costume designs with Michelle, I created the mood board for Gabriel Goodman's outfits, and I gathered the fabric samples for Diana's dance dress. I've had my hand in almost every department, helping wherever I can.~~" ~~Her~~ ~~Cornelia's~~ lungs restricted painfully, and ~~Cornelia-she~~ bites the inside of her cheek to keep herself from spiraling.

"But your name has never come up," Ledie explains. "For all that you've been helping, you've never been mentioned. If you want the chance to be a lead designer, you have to make sure your name gets on projects. Don't let others take credit for the effort you put into their projects."

"I just figured since you were professors you would know," Cornelia manages ~~sd~~ to get out, ~~a~~ ~~past the~~ lump swelling in her throat, "~~o~~Or that you would see a difference in the quality they usually put in."

Commented [SW1]: strike and replace with "on the table". clarity of space.

Commented [SW2]: "Cornelia's stomach drops, but she ignores it." or something similar would show more active phrasing

Commented [SW3]: Perhaps move to beginning of sentence to space character's dialogue and keep speech together

Commented [SW4]: move this to the end of the list for clarity between past and current/ongoing actions, OR have as separate sentence after the rest

Commented [SW5]: clarity issue: is professors supposed to be singular, or is "you" referring to more than one person?
suggestion: "I just thought that, since you were their professor, you would know,"

"We're not omniscient, we aren't going to know what we don't see or hear about." ~~T~~^he professor gathers the folders into a stack and hands them to Cornelia, "And again, we only give ~~h~~^head positions to upperclassman." I can see about getting you on as assistant set designer, but I can't give you anything more than that."

"But, I have everything you could need right here," Cornelia ~~tries to argue~~^{argues}, "I have budget expectations, stage and set measurements, a material~~s~~ list. I've already put so much work into this."

Professor Ledie still ~~didn't~~^{doesn't} look impressed, "Aiden Smith has been given the position already. ~~H~~^he's already created ~~—~~"

"Aiden?" Cornelia ~~was~~^{is} incredulous, "I've been helping Aiden ~~create~~ his design submission. He doesn't even know how to make a master blueprint ~~—~~ how is he supposed to be lead set designer? He's useless!"

"Bad mouthing your colleague is not a smart way to get what you want."

Cornelia's teeth grind together and her ~~nose starts~~^{eyes burn} to burn with suppressed tears, "I'm trying to tell you, you made the wrong choice."

The older woman sighs again, leaning ~~back~~^{back} further in her chair, as if all the fight has been drawn out of her in a single breath, "I can't give you the senior position, and with the attitude you just showed ~~me~~, I don't think I'm comfortable giving you an assistant job either. You can stay on the crew and work your way up, like all the other freshmen do." She motions for Cornelia to leave, dismissing her easily.

Cornelia doesn't even bother grabbing her things before exiting the room, carefully attempting to keep her tears in check. ~~She's~~^{she} sure that if she stopped to gather her things, she would break down completely, and she didn't want to leave ~~behind~~^{behind} the impression that she was a crybaby.

The one time she had tried to step up and take the spotlight, she was taken out by her own lack of presence.

She wished~~s~~^d she had pushed to get her name on the projects ~~she had worked on~~^{she had worked on}. ~~I~~^{she} instead of just letting the juniors and seniors get all the glory and praise. She ~~is~~^{was} used to sitting behind people as the spotlight followed them, always content to sit in the shadows~~s~~ they cast.

She wipes her face fiercely, ~~patting~~^{pats} her cheeks, ~~and letting her nails bite~~^{and digs her nails} into her wrist until the urge to cry recedes.

Next time? Next time she helps, she's making sure her name is ~~bolded~~^{bold} and underlined~~—~~[—] so that she won't go unnoticed ever again.

Cornelia ~~can't help but wonder~~^{wonders} how long that conviction will last before she finds herself in the shadows once more.

Commented [SW6]: change to present tense. maybe "cries indignantly"

Commented [SW7]: "eyes burn". noses don't have tears ;P

Commented [SW8]: changed tense so that actions happen sequentially, and not simultaneously. changed to active voice for consistency of listed action tenses

Commented [SW9]: this is a change in the kind of narrative voice the rest of the story has been in, where we didn't get insight into the characters thoughts or inner monologue. 3rd person vs. 3rd person omniscient, I think. something to consider

Commented [SW10R9]: one way to make it seem a bit more natural is by changing the previous paragraph to say something like, "Next time? she thinks. Next time I'm making sure..." and continue the thought in first person, like dialogue. This will help to set a precedence for a narrator that doesn't just report actions, but also has insight/ability to see into characters' thoughts. Otherwise, how would a narrator that can't read thoughts know what a character is wondering, right?