

Shreddy, Nina

FACEBENDER. *(softly, to himself, but GOLDEN overhears)* Why does she run from me?

GOLDEN. Dude, that was most definitely not about you.

(FACEBENDER follows CANNIBAL QUEEN off into the green room, and GOLDEN follows FACEBENDER. NINA and SHREDDY are alone. It's the tiniest bit awkward.)

START —————

NINA. Shreddy, I really am sorry.

SHREDDY. You said. You tuned.

NINA. Yeah, but I feel like I should . . . I need to say something more. To you. You were nice enough to coach me and I felt like maybe we were becoming . . . like . . . maybe . . .

SHREDDY. Is it that hard for you to say the word "friends"?

NINA. *(jokingly confused)* Fa-rends? Yes, friends. I want us to be friends because I think you're cool.

SHREDDY. I am. I am cool.

(A short pause. He smiles at her.)

NINA. Sooo . . . Chicago is your home turf. Gonna do "I Don't Wanna Grow Up" again tonight?

SHREDDY. Indeed. Johnny Ramone and I are in this together.

(NINA gives him a look.)

SHREDDY. What??

NINA. I mean, so many Ramones songs objectively rock harder.

SHREDDY. Were that true, WERE that true, and I'm not saying it is, how hard a song rocks or how technically impressive it is, is NOT the only thing to consider when choosing a song. Everything about "I Don't Wanna Grow Up" makes it perfect for air guitar, for me, and for the Central Conference Finals.

NINA. *(exaggerated)* Gooo ooon.

SHREDDY. The Ramones are from Forest Hills, Queens. I am from the South Side of Chicago. We are in Chicago now. This is all urban kismet.

NINA. "I Wanna Be Sedated" is better-known.

SHREDDY. Grraaah! Have you learned nothing? Am I, Shreddy Eddy, a man who wants to be sedated??

NINA. Well, it's just—

SHREDDY. *(interrupting)* You are the music and the music is you! You think I just picked my song off a jukebox? "I Don't Wanna Grow Up" was written by Tom Waits for the Bone Machine album, and he wrote that song for EXACTLY ME.

NINA. Exactly you?

SHREDDY. *(getting really worked up)* EXACTLY. It's about a young man, a few years into adulthood, looking at his parents, looking at his society, and stating firmly, "This is broken, and I opt out." He doesn't want the car, or the mortgage, or the soul-sucking job, or to be bald and filled with doubt. He doesn't have an alternative solution, because he's running on fear, he's frantic, he's not thinking logically. The rhythm of it, the speed of the recording, the repetition—it's a tantrum. He's trying to stay a child, he's running as fast as he can in the opposite direction, even though there's NOTHING THERE. It's messed up and it's inevitable. You can't not grow up. *(pause)* That's what Tom Waits knew. That's what the Ramones recorded. That's what I bring to the stage.

NINA. You have the "thing." It's charisma, it's magnetism—

SHREDDY. *(interrupting)* It's hard work, The Nina. Here *(he smacks his head)* and here *(he smacks his heart)*. *(Almost angry)* You don't waltz into a qualifier with Guns N' Roses because you're mad at your ex-boyfriend. We're here to share something, not to take something. Some of us here want to win this because we believe it's special.

NINA. I think it's special, too! I really do.

SHREDDY. I hope that's true. *(pause)* You want to qualify in New York next month? You want to be an air guitar champion? You need to risk everything, because you're gonna have to take it over my dead body. I'm your friend backstage, I'm your friend in the green room, but for those sixty seconds onstage, I'm your competition. And I bleed this.

SHREDDY EDDY'S PERFORMANCE

(Lights shift quickly. GOLDEN, SHREDDY, FACEBENDER, NINA, and CANNIBAL QUEEN appear, lined up across the stage, under the bright lights of the show. We hear a sound cue of a large, enthusiastic, cheering crowd.)

[#10 "I Don't Wanna Grow Up"]

(SHREDDY EDDY steps out in front of the other characters and slays the Ramones's recording of "I Don't Wanna Grow Up.")

SHREDDY EDDY's anger and fear and doubt are perfectly channeled by this song. He is right—it was written for him. It's

STOP