

INT. A PROSCENIUM STAGE

Red velvet curtains glisten under the spotlight. A microphone patiently waits center stage as does the audience: an endless shadow of figures that fade into darkness. Suddenly, they erupt with glee as Candice Palladino, effervescent & magnetic show-woman, dances toward her light.

CANDICE
Well, howdy, folks.

The cheers subside as she pulls the mic from its cradle and playfully curtsies.

CANDICE
Thank you. If you liked that,
you'll love this.

Giggles. From the audience and Candice.

CANDICE
Well... Here we are.
(taking it all in)
The beginning. Beginnings. Not
easy for me. The advice I got
was, "Sell yourself, kid. Let 'em
have ya."

She grimaces as she starts to pace. Her spotlight follows.

CANDICE
Ya?! Okay... You... ME?!
(she snaps)
Got it: I'm from New York but
love a lil' twang in my music.
Dogs are better. Than anything.
And joy, emotion not the human,
accompanies me wherever I go.
Just ask the ritzy party planner
who hugged me because I single
handedly got her party started.
(laughter)
Not a euphemism.

Candice drops her mic then points to the tech booth at the back of the house.

CANDICE
Barry hates that part.

A new mic flies from backstage. She catches it. Obviously.

CANDICE
Rehearsal.

She winks to laughter and applause.

CANDICE
Okay, I know. Back to 'Sell
yourself. Hmm, alright...
(groaning)
I don't...know.
(Frustrated)
Who was I?!

She paces some more contemplating her life's choices.

CANDICE
I thought. And thought. And..

Then suddenly stops and faces out to her audience.

CANDICE
Lightbulb.

Eyes sparkling as if they just made an awesome discovery.

CANDICE
Underneath the brash, bold, and
silly exterior, I was an artist.
No, am. Definitely AM.

A knowing hush silences the crowd as she takes her space.

CANDICE
Gone are the days of wishing &
whining. Because now I do.
Creating makes me feel alive. It
gives me purpose.
(Pause)
It f*cking feels good.

She smiles. Slyly.

CANDICE
Sure, there's more, and you'll
soon find out what but, simply,
that's me in all my weird, artsy
glory. Candice Palladino:
Actress. Creator. Bundle of joy.
Put it on the billboards just
like that and with blinking
lights in case I ever forget.

Laughter and applause reverberates from each crevice.

CANDICE
Sounds like a good beginning,
right?!

The crowd cheers and shouts, "Yes!"

CANDICE
Good. Because I'm here. And ready
for more. Make way, World.
(MORE)

CANDICE (CONT'D)
(belting out each note
acapella)
I. Am. Here.