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# Dance Academy

SERIES ONE

EPISODE 12  
BLOCK 4

**"Pressure"**

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**RELEASE SCRIPT**  
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TARA, KAT, SAMMY, ABIGAIL, CHRISTIAN, N/S FIRST YEARS (GIRLS AND BOYS), MISS RAINE (O.S.), TARA (V.O.)

The world is a red, swirling haze that pulses like a heartbeat. We pull out until we realise we're looking at a large blister, that's swelling on top of an already bloodied foot.

TARA (V.O.)

*Excess repeated pressure in a concentrated area causes local heat build-up.*

Blister's POV as Sammy leans into shot.

SAMMY

You really should pop that.

TARA (V.O.)

*The heat forces a separation in the top layer of skin. The epidermis.*

Kat leans in on Tara's other side, needle in her hand and a sadistic glint in her eye.

KAT

Let me at it.

Tara shrugs them both away and plasters on a bandage.

TARA (V.O.)

*Fluid rapidly fills the space, forming what is commonly known as a blister.*

Tara looks up at the crowd of first year students hovering outside the door to the studio. They're all dressed for contemporary but more immaculately groomed than usual. The girls are all in their best leotards, the boys have ironed their t-shirts and washed their ballet flats. Most seem anxious. One girl is praying.

TARA (V.O.)

*It's the kind of pressure that's everywhere at the Academy.*

Sammy shuffles uncomfortably in his tights. He shrugs, apologetic, off Christian's disgusted look.

SAMMY

Exam stomach. I get gassy when I'm anxious.

CHRISTIAN

It's a gift.

1

CONTINUED:

1

Christian continues his warm up down the hall and out of the firing line.

TARA

(to Sammy)

My diarrhoea's verbal. Apparently I just talk and talk and... (really you should interrupt me)

KAT

(over)

I eat like everything.

She glances at the chocolate bar she's holding.

KAT

But then I do that anyway.

Sammy turns to Abigail, who is contorting her body into an impossible position.

SAMMY

What about you Abigail? What happens when you get nervous?

ABIGAIL

I don't.

The door opens. Behind it, all Tara can see is a bright white light.

MISS RAINE (O.S.)

First year? We're ready for you now.

Abigail walks through the door, head held high. In varying states of terror, the others follow her in. Kat sniffs and looks back at Sammy who has farted silently. He blushes bright red.

SAMMY

Hey I warned you.

2

**INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 10**

2

TARA, KAT, SAMMY, CHRISTIAN, ABIGAIL, MISS RAINE, PATRICK, BONNIE, N/S FIRST YEARS (BOYS AND GIRLS), N/S ASSESSORS, TARA (V.O.)

Contemporary exam: A group of first years are dancing flat out in front of a panel which includes Miss Raine and Patrick. Some students are confident, some are terrified, all are trying to make the best impression possible. The assessors watch with eagle-eyes, looking for faults.

2

CONTINUED:

2

The world is somewhat fractured, slower than usual, and we don't hear the music. Instead we focus on the sound of a pencil scratch made on an assessment sheet, the soft landing out of a jump, Tara's heart beating.

TARA (V.O.)

*Olympic swimmers train their whole lives for one race and when it finally comes, they can slip off the blocks, or miss their tumble-turn. No matter how hard they've worked it can all fall apart in a moment.*

Bonnie is dancing beside Tara. She falls out of a jump and lands on her backside. Tara gasps. After the briefest hesitation, Tara keeps dancing, stepping over Bonnie.

TARA (V.O.)

*It's the same with dancing. When you're on stage there are no second chances. Just your body and your will. Whether you pass or fail is entirely up to you.*

Tara leaps high in the air.

3

**EXT. ACADEMY/CAFE - DAY 10**

3

TARA, KAT, SAMMY, ETHAN, CHRISTIAN, N/S STUDENTS

Tara is sitting beside Sammy in the cafeteria. He's studying from a textbook while simultaneously listening to an mp3 player and practising his port de bras.

SAMMY

These people are sadists. Who would schedule academic exams the same week as our dancing ones?

Kat slips into one of the spare seats, carrying her lunch tray. She looks to Tara, questioning.

TARA

Multi-tasking meltdown.

Kat removes one of Sammy's headphones.

KAT

I need your help with Anatomy.

SAMMY

My help? I don't have time to help. I need to get A pluses in all subjects.  
(MORE)

3

CONTINUED:

3

SAMMY (CONT'D)

I'm taking Advanced Physiology. Do you know how difficult that is?

Sammy re-inserts his headphones and goes back to studying. He stands and uses the table as a barre.

TARA

More to the point, since when do you care about Anatomy?

KAT

Natasha rang, promising a mother-daughter holiday - my choice - if I can scrape some non-embarrassing exam marks.

TARA

That's fantastic.

Tara knows how important this would be to Kat. She just shrugs, playing it down.

KAT

Total bribe but I'm thinking Central Australia. It's literally a dance desert...

Tara gradually stops listening and the world slows down as Ethan approaches their table. Tara's heart has also pretty much stopped beating, yet outwardly she sips her juice and tries to play it cool. Much cooler than usual.

KAT

(in the background)

No classes, no theatres, no critics. It's brilliant, she'll hate it.

Ethan's carrying a basketball and uses the other hand to grab the burger off Kat's plate. The world reverts to real time.

KAT

Hey!

Swallowing a small mouthful of burger, Ethan turns to Tara.

ETHAN

We still on for rehearsal later?

If Tara's freaking out, we only see it for a flicker.

TARA

I don't think I can today but maybe tomorrow?

3

CONTINUED:

3

ETHAN

Whenever. I can't wait.

He holds her gaze, flirting. Kat clocks the strange vibes passing between them.

Ethan wipes his mouth and passes the burger back to Kat. He briefly touches Tara on the shoulder and leaves the cafe.

Kat turns back to Tara who is trying her hardest to appear nonchalant.

KAT

What was that?

Tara is innocent as she sips her juice.

TARA

We're rehearsing for his choreography exam.

KAT

No my brother was just in flirt mode.

Tara starts packing up her things, looking to deflect this line of questioning.

TARA

It's Ethan. He's always in flirt mode.

SAMMY

But not with you.

They glance at him. He's still reading from the textbook, wearing the headphones. How did he hear that?

KAT

My point precisely. So what gives little one?

Tara blushes so red that even Sammy removes his headphones. They both turn to stare at her.

4

**EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY 10**

4

ETHAN, CHRISTIAN

INTERCUT WITH:

5

**EXT. ACADEMY/WHARFSIDE/STAIRS - DAY 10**

5

TARA, KAT, SAMMY

5

CONTINUED:

5

Ethan and Christian play a fast and furious game of one on one basketball, letting off steam from the exams. Christian dribbles the ball after shooting a hoop, stunned by what Ethan has just told him.

CHRISTIAN

No. Why?

ETHAN

(genuinely baffled)

It was weird. Something came over me.  
I kind of... felt like it.

CUT TO:

Kat and Sammy are trailing after Tara as she strides down the wharf, trying to avoid their questions.

KAT

Hang on, after discussing this  
obsession in nauseating detail...

SAMMY

I wish we were being examined on it.

KAT

He pashes you and you just "forget" to  
mention it?

Tara turns back to them.

TARA

It wasn't a pash. It was an almost-  
pash.

Kat and Sammy exchange another look and race after her.

CUT TO:

Christian dribbles towards the key. Ethan intercepts and steals the ball - heads towards the hoop.

CHRISTIAN

I thought you were into Dana?

ETHAN

Lost interest.

CUT TO:

Kat and Sammy are now following Tara up the stairs.

5

CONTINUED:

5

TARA

Plus it only happened after Dana rejected him, so I'm not going to read anything into it.

KAT

Since when?

TARA

Since you always tell me I blow things out of proportion.

KAT

But you never listen.

SAMMY

It's part of your charm.

CUT TO:

Christian has stopped playing completely - and we have the unusual sight of him almost wetting himself with laughter.

CHRISTIAN

(laughing)

Nothing... Sorry... It's just it's...

(Tara)

Ethan rolls his eyes. Another thought occurs to Christian.

CHRISTIAN

Are you going to go there again?

CUT TO:

TARA

This is exam week. I'm not going to do anything but focus on my dancing.

CUT TO:

Ethan completes a perfect layup, sinks the ball. He flashes Christian a cheeky, confident grin. Of course he is.

ETHAN

What do you think?

6

**INT. ACADEMY/BOYS' DRESSING ROOM - DAY 10**

6

SAMMY, ABIGAIL

Abigail stands outside a toilet cubicle in the boys dressing room. Sammy is inside, we only see the pants that are around his ankles.



ABIGAIL

So for some unknown reason... maybe I  
killed someone in another life...  
you're my partner in the pas de deux  
exam.

SAMMY (O.S.)

(surprised)

Abigail? Is that you?

We hear the sound of him standing up and buckling his belt.

ABIGAIL

They're obviously challenging me which  
is fine but also completely unfair if  
it affects my scholarship chances.

The toilet flushes and Sammy emerges, confused by why she's  
there.

SAMMY

Was there something you wanted?  
Specifically?

ABIGAIL

Yes. We clearly have a lot of work to  
do. And by "we" you do know I mean  
"you" right?

She looks pointedly over to the sink for Sammy to wash his  
hands. He finds himself obeying.

SAMMY

One on one? Awesome. I have physiology  
on Wednesday but after that... (I'm  
all yours)

ABIGAIL

I've booked the studio for every night  
this week.

Sammy pauses under the soap.

SAMMY

Right. So, I'll just study instead of  
sleeping.

ABIGAIL

Tonight. Eight-thirty.

She leaves the dressing room. Sammy waves goodbye with his  
dripping hands.

6

CONTINUED:

6

SAMMY

It's a date.

ABIGAIL

It really isn't.

Matter-of-fact, Sammy turns around and goes straight back into the toilet cubicle to get rid of some more stomach-affected nerves.

As he shuts the door behind him, MONTAGE BEGINS.

7

**INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 10**

7

TARA, KAT, ABIGAIL, MISS RAINE, N/S FIRST YEAR (GIRLS), N/S ASSESSORS

Classical Ballet Exam: The first year girls are lined up along the barre, in full ballet uniform.

Tara's eyes are focused straight ahead as she endeavours to make her developpés as perfect as possible. Even Kat is trying harder than usual, her brow beaded with sweat.

However, it's Abigail who shows grim determination. Her jaw is set as she extends her leg into a second position that's higher than everybody else's.

Miss Raine makes an approving tick on her assessment sheet. Abigail's clearly in a class of her own.

8

**INT. ACADEMY/REHEARSAL STUDIO - NIGHT 10**

8

SAMMY, ABIGAIL

It's dark outside the studio as Abigail and Sammy work on the difficult lift they have to perform in the pas de deux exam.

Abigail runs to Sammy, preparing to leap onto his shoulder, but his timing is off and he doesn't catch her at the right moment. She shoots him a murderous look.

9

**EXT. OBSERVATORY HILL - DAY 11**

9

TARA, KAT, SAMMY, ETHAN, N/S PASSERSBY

In a group study session on the hill, Sammy is trying to explain something from the Anatomy textbook to Tara and Kat.

He snaps his fingers as Tara becomes distracted by the sight of Ethan jogging past. Tara reluctantly gives him her attention.

10      **INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 11**      10  
TARA, KAT, CHRISTIAN, SAMMY, ABIGAIL, HIP HOP TEACHER, N/S FIRST  
YEARS, N/S ASSESSORS

Hip Hop Exam: Kat looks uncharacteristically elated as she aces the routine. Tara smiles at her from the sidelines.

Christian wows everyone by back-flipping high into the air, as if it's the easiest thing in the world.

11      **INT. ACADEMY/REHEARSAL STUDIO - NIGHT 11**      11  
SAMMY, ABIGAIL

Sammy and Abigail continue to work on their pas de deux dance after hours. Abigail runs to Sammy but he crumples underneath her again.

Sammy is waiting to be lynched but Abigail can't even bring herself to comment. She just goes back and starts again.

12      **EXT. SYDNEY HARBOUR - TIME LAPSE**      12

The clouds travel at breakneck speed as night turns into day over the shimmering water.

13      **EXT. SYDNEY HARBOURSIDE - DAY 12**      13  
ABIGAIL, MISS RAINE, N/S EXTRAS

Abigail is red-cheeked and running her usual route beside the Harbour. She notices Miss Raine up ahead, carrying a coffee, and hurries to catch up.

ABIGAIL  
Morning Miss Raine.

Miss Raine clocks Abigail's running attire.

MISS RAINE  
Abigail, it's Exam Week. Shouldn't you be conserving energy?

ABIGAIL  
I don't think enough of us worry about cardio.

Miss Raine keeps walking, on her way towards the Academy. Abigail slows to walk with her.

ABIGAIL

I wonder if that's something the scholarship committee takes into account?

Miss Raine knows exactly where this is going and hides a smile as she sips her coffee.

MISS RAINÉ

I wonder.

ABIGAIL

Do you know if my name is on the shortlist?

She keeps digging as Miss Raine remains noncommittal.

ABIGAIL

It's just that I've worked harder than anyone since day one.

MISS RAINÉ

You have. There are other factors.

ABIGAIL

Such as?

MISS RAINÉ

Abigail, you're a smart dancer. You know there are certain limitations to your technique.

This cuts Abigail to the core but she tries not to show it.

MISS RAINÉ

I had them too. We have to work to the best of our ability.

She grants Abigail a rare smile.

MISS RAINÉ

Which you've been doing. I appreciate that.

ABIGAIL

But you're saying it still might not be enough?

For a moment Miss Raine's cool veneer slips away. She's almost compassionate as she studies Abigail.

13

CONTINUED:

13

MISS RAINE

Sometimes ballet can be as unfair as it is unforgiving, but in my experience I've found hard work can overcome most obstacles.

Miss Raine sweeps away, heading towards the Academy. Abigail stands rooted to the spot, contemplating this.

14

**INT. ACADEMY/REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY 12**

14

TARA, ETHAN

Tara, wearing rehearsal gear, is standing in front of Ethan. It's their first one-on-one contact since the almost-pash incident and she is trying hard to be professional.

ETHAN

You warm? Because if you want some more time... (I don't mind waiting)

TARA

I'm good, thanks.

Ethan flashes her his gorgeous, sexy grin. Tara can't help but smile back.

ETHAN

Okay. How about you run it the whole way through? I think I might have distracted you a bit last time. Sorry... (about that)

Tara's smile has died abruptly. She misinterprets his flirting for letting her down easy.

TARA

No. That's so fine. I... um... you know, it happens.

She's clearly flustered and it makes Ethan grin again.

ETHAN

What happens?

TARA

People get caught up in a moment and then... no big deal.

Ethan blinks. That wasn't really the response he was hoping for. Tara quickly changes the subject.

TARA

So I'm starting? First positions?

14

CONTINUED:

14

ETHAN

Yeah. First positions.

Ethan presses play on the remote control and Tara begins to dance. He watches her slightly confused. What just happened?

15

**EXT. ACADEMY/WHARFSIDE - DAY 12**

15

KAT, ETHAN, CHRISTIAN, ABIGAIL, SEAN, N/S NERVOUS STUDENTS

Kat has dragged a deck chair onto the wharf. She's trying to relax but is irritated by students everywhere who are stressing about exams. Some are studying from textbooks, others are marking through choreography. Abigail is relentlessly using a skipping rope to work on her cardio.

Sean approaches Kat, tentatively.

SEAN

We have pas de deux tomorrow. Do you think maybe we should practise?

Kat pretends to consider this.

KAT

How about you go over there, I stay here and we work on the whole mental connection thing?

Sean nods - great idea - and goes away. Kat covers her face with a textbook. She groans as she feels someone standing in her sun.

KAT

Honestly people. My blisters have blisters, what more do you want from me?

ETHAN

Nothing.

Kat removes the textbook from her face and sees Ethan hovering above her.

KAT

Then you can stay.

He sits down and they sit by side for a moment. Kat closes her eyes once more.

ETHAN

(trying to be casual)  
So what's going on? How's Tara?

KAT

You just had rehearsal with her.

ETHAN

Yeah right... So did she say anything about it?

Kat eyes snap open.

KAT

No.

ETHAN

What?

Kat sits up and stares at him, horrified.

KAT

You're not even going to think about what you're thinking about.

ETHAN

I'm not thinking anything.

Kat doesn't believe him for a second.

KAT

Right. It's just a coincidence that Tara says she's over you and you're suddenly interested in how she's doing?

Ethan goes to defend himself but Kat points her finger.

KAT

My friend is not a challenge to your pathetic male ego. You'll break her heart.

ETHAN

(cocky)

I thought you said she was over me?

Christian approaches, carrying a skateboard.

CHRISTIAN

Mate, I'm heading out?

ETHAN

(shakes his head)

Got things to do here.

15

CONTINUED:

15

Ethan flashes Kat a wicked grin, as he gets to his feet and heads off. Christian and Kat are left looking at each other. She eyes off his skateboard.

KAT

Can I have a go?

16

**EXT. WALSH BAY/SKATE AREA - DAY 12**

16

KAT, CHRISTIAN, N/S SKATERS (GIRLS AND BOYS)

In a place near the Academy where we've never been before, skaters are dynamically showing off their tricks. It's a whole new scene for Kat who watches wide-eyed as one them flies past.

She's standing on Christian's skateboard, wearing his helmet and protective gear, as she learns to balance. Christian doesn't look all that thrilled as he walks beside her, lightly holding her hand while she rolls along.

KAT

This idea was genius. It is so good to be away from that freak show. I feel like saying - they're just exams people. We're not curing world hunger.

CHRISTIAN

Uh-huh.

Christian bites his lip as Kat takes her own "non-stressed" rant up a notch.

KAT

Seriously, it's like you and me are the only two people not acting like the world's going to explode. Everyone just needs to relax.

Christian grimaces as a passing SKATER smirks at the beginner lesson he's giving.

CHRISTIAN

Yeah they do.

Kat doesn't get that he's including her in that statement.

KAT

So when am I going to ollie?

CHRISTIAN

You have to roll by yourself first.



16

CONTINUED:

16

KAT

(impatient)

Back foot on the tail. Bend my knees.

She pushes off and starts to roll, dropping his hand.

KAT

See I'm rolling?

CHRISTIAN

If you want to turn, you gotta shift  
your weight. And if you need to stop -

But Kat has shifted her weight and the skateboard is turning  
towards the slope of a hill.

KAT

Uh - Christian?

CHRISTIAN

Put your back foot on the ground. Back  
foot.

But Kat has lost control and is hurtling down the hill. She  
screams at the top of her lungs, but is also grinning from ear-  
to-ear - not caring if she stacks it.

17

**EXT. OBSERVATORY HILL - DAY 12**

17

TARA, ETHAN

Tara is on her hands and knees in the grass. She's holding a  
four-leaf-clover in her hand and searching for another one.

ETHAN (O.S.)

There you are. Lose something?

Tara looks up, sprung, as she sees Ethan approaching. She  
quickly drops the clover into the grass.

TARA

(covering)

Yeah. Just my... bracelet.

ETHAN

I'll help you look.

TARA

No that's okay.

But he's already on his hands and knees. Tara winces - they're  
now both looking for something that doesn't exist.

TARA

I'm not even sure I put it on this morning so... (you really don't have to)

Ethan looks at her strangely.

ETHAN

You're searching for jewellery you're not sure you were wearing?

Tara comes clean, embarrassed.

TARA

Okay. I have this superstition thing about four-leaf-clovers. I try to pick one for each exam.

Tara holds the four-leaf-clover she's found up to Ethan. He stares at it in total astonishment.

ETHAN

How did you do that? I've never...  
(seen one before)

Ethan takes the clover and looks at it upside down, to make sure it's not a fake.

TARA

It's like my one talent. Apparently the leprechauns wave at me or something. I don't know.

Ethan has stopped staring at the clover and is now staring at Tara. She's beautiful with the sunlight catching her hair.

ETHAN

Socks.

TARA

Pardon?

ETHAN

I don't change them during exam week. Superstition.

TARA

Really? That's... (gross)

ETHAN

Gross. I know. You have a bit of dirt on your... (nose)

Tara goes to wipe it off but just ends up spreading it further.

17

CONTINUED:

17

ETHAN

Here.

Ethan wipes the dirt away gently and they find themselves staring at each other. The world slows down. It's a seriously awesome moment until Tara realises that Ethan is leaning in towards her.

She watches as his lips come closer and closer. He's about to kiss her when at the last minute Tara freaks. The world thuds back to real time as they almost knock heads.

ETHAN

Are you all right?

Tara is already scrambling to her feet.

TARA

Yup. Sorry. I just remembered that I have some stuff. You know, to do.

She almost trips over her feet in her hurry to get away, leaving Ethan totally bewildered.

18

**INT. ACADEMY/CORRIDOR - DAY 12**

18

ABIGAIL, SAMMY, N/S STUDENTS

Sammy is sneaking through the corridors, trying to hide from Abigail. He's so intent on looking over his shoulder, he doesn't realise until he's bumped straight into her.

ABIGAIL

I've been looking for you all day. I hope you've been working on the lift?

She's a terrifying sight, becoming unstuck at the seams.

SAMMY

Have I? Feel this bicep. I'm a lift machine.

Abigail doesn't crack a smile. Sammy notices she seems even more wound up than usual. Her face is pale.

SAMMY

But you sure you don't want to take the night off? You're looking kind of tense.

ABIGAIL

(coldly furious)  
You're telling me I look tense?

18

CONTINUED:

18

Sammy backpedals quickly.

SAMMY

Tense and beautiful. Plus, realistically, there's only so much work you can do. I know with my studying... (I can peak too early)

ABIGAIL

Look, if they gave me a real partner I wouldn't have to work so hard.

She turns to stalk away and Sammy follows after her.

SAMMY

You know, misplaced anger is often a by-product of low blood sugar. When was the last time you ate something?

ABIGAIL

My blood sugar is fine. My only problem is you.

Abigail continues determinedly down the corridor. She stops as she turns the corner, suddenly dizzy. The world rocks for the briefest moment but then steadies. She shakes her head and keeps walking on.

19

**EXT. SYDNEY HARBOURSIDE - SUNSET 12**

19

KAT, CHRISTIAN, N/S EXTRAS

Christian is walking beside Kat, carrying his skateboard. Her knees are grazed and she's hobbling, but laughing at the pain.

KAT

I am going to be on struggle street tomorrow.

CHRISTIAN

I gave you a helmet.

She grimaces as she sees the Academy up ahead and stops.

KAT

You can feel the stress vibes from here. So wish we didn't have to go back.

CHRISTIAN

Why are you?

Kat laughs as if this is a genuinely funny question.

KAT

Bribery mostly. Plus if I didn't live on Planet Dance there's the chance my parents would consider me an alien life-form.

Christian sees through her.

CHRISTIAN

And that's all there is? You don't care at all?

He says it so plainly that Kat has to think about it.

KAT

I don't know. Maybe. But it definitely makes me feel dirty when I do it for extended periods. Like it gives the parentals way too much satisfaction.

This has been a personal admission for Kat. She changes the subject.

KAT

So what's your secret? How can you stay so cool?

CHRISTIAN

(deadpan)

Well, for one, I'm awesome.

Kat laughs again, surprised that Christian made a joke.

CHRISTIAN

And, you know, I just need to pass in order to stay so...

KAT

But didn't you know that it's "unacceptable not to excel".

Sarcastic as she channels her parents.

KAT

That's what they tell me.

CHRISTIAN

(shrugs)

Guess my thing's the opposite to yours. No one's around to notice, so no pressure.

19

CONTINUED:

19

KAT

Your terms. I'd like to get me some of that.

She sighs, imagining that freedom. But a different look has crossed Christian's face. He might actually like someone to care.

CHRISTIAN

It has its moments.

They keep walking back to the Academy, both avoiding giving it their all but for opposite reasons.

20

**INT. ACADEMY/REHEARSAL STUDIO - NIGHT 12**

20

ABIGAIL, SAMMY

Moonlight is streaming through the window and Abigail is rehearsing her part in the pas de deux dance. She's pushing herself to the max, not letting herself get away with anything.

Sammy enters and watches her for a moment, not wanting to interrupt.

Abigail is unhappy with her execution of a particular step. She goes back to repeat a sequence and at that moment spots Sammy in the mirror.

ABIGAIL

You came.

Abigail flicks off the stereo and turns around to face him. Her version of an apology.

SAMMY

I want to do well too. I just don't think there's any point killing ourselves in the process.

ABIGAIL

That's where you and I differ.

She's only half-joking.

ABIGAIL

Let's start. No marking.

Abigail hits play on the CD player. They take their positions and begin to dance. We track out as they begin to rehearse together flat-out.

21

INT. BOARDING HOUSE/Common Room - NIGHT 12

21

TARA, KAT, CHRISTIAN, BONNIE, N/S PASHING BOY, N/S STUDENTS,  
TARA (V.O)

Tara is anxiously perched on an armchair in the common room. She glances at her watch and then looks up as Bonnie and a BOY fall onto the couch opposite her. He kisses her on the nose. She kisses him on the eyelid.

TARA (V.O.)

*You know sheep don't kiss. I want to know how humans decided that's what you do when you like someone.*

Tara stares half repulsed, half intrigued, as their lips finally connect and start moving in close-up.

TARA (V.O.)

*When you think about, it's a weird sucking motion. With unnatural tongue etiquette.*

Kat and Christian enter the common room, a new intimacy between them. Kat makes Christian laugh.

KAT

... you know, in my new career as a pro skater.

Tara stands up straight away.

TARA

Kat I need to talk to you. In private.

She looks pointedly at Christian to leave.

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, I want to be around for that.

Kat watches him leave, not a little regretfully.

TARA

So there was another "almost" incident.

She inclines her head to the liplocked couple. Kat's face blackens.

KAT

I'll kill him.

TARA

No, don't. I wanted him to kiss me. I think.

21

CONTINUED:

21

Kat studies her friend; she's not going to change her mind.

KAT

Well, you know what I think, but I'm not going to stand in your way.

TARA

(nervous)

Good. That's good. Because what if I said I needed your help?

22

INT. BOARDING HOUSE/TARA'S ROOM - NIGHT 12

22

TARA, KAT

Tara and Kat are sitting cross-legged on Tara's bed.

KAT

Never? How is that even possible?

Kat is shocked by Tara's admission that she's never kissed a guy before.

TARA

It's hopeless right? People expect you to be a bad kisser at twelve but by almost sixteen there's no excuse.

Kat slowly tries to get her head around it.

KAT

Hey you don't know you're going to be bad if you haven't done it before. Just... less experienced.

TARA

Oh I'll suck. I'll get all up in my head, like in technique class, and then I'll probably bite him or something.

KAT

Teeth away for starters. We'll treat it like technique class then. Break down the movement.

Kat grabs Tara's childhood teddy bear off the bookshelf.

KAT

Meet your new pas de deux partner.

Kat passes Tara the bear.



22

CONTINUED:

22

TARA

His name is Sir Joshua. And I'm not comfortable corrupting him.

KAT

He's mad for it. Trust me.

Tara looks down at the bear's sad face - what a girl will do for love.

23

**INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - NIGHT 12**

23

ABIGAIL, SAMMY

Sammy and Abigail are performing a section of the pas de deux. Sammy looks anxious as they reach the difficult shoulder lift but this time they pull it off expertly.

SAMMY

Yes! We did it! We rock!

He twirls her around. Abigail smiles, weakly, and wriggles down to the ground.

ABIGAIL

We should run it again, straight away. Make sure it sticks.

She goes to take her first position but sways unsteady on her feet. Sammy notices.

SAMMY

What's wrong?

ABIGAIL

I'm fine.

But she's clearly not. She looks pale and weak.

SAMMY

You're not fine.

ABIGAIL

Just a bit dizzy. It passes.

SAMMY

What do you mean? Does this happen often? Abigail... (this could be serious)

ABIGAIL

(over)

Can you stop procrastinating and let's... (go through it again)

But realisation has dawned on Sammy.

SAMMY

Serious question - when was the last time you ate something?

It's her sore spot.

ABIGAIL

I eat okay.

SAMMY

Not this week. I haven't even seen you drink water.

ABIGAIL

I'm not interested in being bloated.

Sammy can't believe this is her response.

SAMMY

Your body needs fuel. That's not even Advanced Physiology.

He looks at her, becoming more concerned by the minute.

SAMMY

We need to go see Dr. Wicks.

Abigail looks genuinely frightened.

ABIGAIL

No. What we need is to get through tomorrow's exam. After that I'll rest all holidays.

SAMMY

But I don't think... (it's right)

ABIGAIL

(panicked)

They won't let me dance and then there's no way I'll get the scholarship. You have to promise me Sammy you won't tell anyone?

She's almost crying and looks so desperate that Sammy caves, against his better judgment.

SAMMY

On one condition.

He reaches into his bag and pulls out some homemade pastries, wrapped in glad wrap.

23

CONTINUED:

23

SAMMY

Mum sent me these for luck.

She takes the pastries gingerly, as if they could bite her.

SAMMY

You look like you could use them.

Abigail slowly smiles, laying on the charm.

ABIGAIL

I thought you said I looked beautiful?

24

**INT. BOARDING HOUSE/Common Room - Night 12**

24

CHRISTIAN, ETHAN, N/S STUDENTS

Christian and Ethan are playing pool in the common room. There's a glass of water on the edge of the table with the four-leaf-clover floating inside.

Ethan misses an easy shot and shakes his head.

ETHAN

I swear I'm coming down with something. Am I... do I feel clammy to you?

Ethan holds his forehead out for inspection. Christian pushes his head away and lines up a shot.

CHRISTIAN

How did it go before? With Tara.

Christian can't help but smirk as he says her name.

ETHAN

Yeah good... I mean, it didn't actually go. But it will.

CHRISTIAN

Losing streak hey?

Christian slams a ball into the pocket.

ETHAN

Wouldn't call it a streak.

CHRISTIAN

First Dana.

Christian sinks another shot.

24

CONTINUED:

24

CHRISTIAN

Then a girl who pretty much carved  
your initials into her forehead.

Ethan's face has paled, seeing the truth in this.

ETHAN

You're right. This is... (bad)

His voice drops to a whisper. We've never seen him so insecure.

ETHAN

Seriously mate am I looking... uglier  
to you?

Christian can't believe he's being asked this. He studies Ethan,  
pretending to take his condition seriously.

CHRISTIAN

Sweaty palms? Fast pulse?

Ethan nods to both. Christian winces as he sinks the black.

ETHAN

(alarmed)  
What's wrong with me?

But Christian's walking away, leaving Ethan with his four-leaf-  
clover to process what might be happening to him.

25

**INT. BOARDING HOUSE/TARA'S ROOM - NIGHT 12**

25

TARA, KAT, SAMMY

Kat is tapping a ruler while she counts, channeling Miss Raine  
in full flight.

KAT

And one and two and three and four.  
Commit to an angle, lean in, and hold,  
hold...

Tara has her face to the bear's mouth, working on her pash-  
technique.

TARA

(muffled)  
This isn't working.

KAT

What?

Tara comes up for air.

25

CONTINUED:

25

TARA

This isn't working. I don't know where to put my nose. Or how breathe at the same time.

KAT

I see. Sir Joshua's not giving a lot back.

Sammy enters the dorm room, leaving the door open.

SAMMY

Have you guys seen Abigail?

But the girls have other things on their mind. Tara looks at Kat, shaking her head. Kat beams.

26

**INT. ACADEMY/GIRLS' DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 12**

26

ABIGAIL

Abigail is staring in the mirror, alone in the empty dressing room. She looks ghostly pale. The tap is running and, after a moment, she splashes water on her face.

Abigail turns the tap off and walks to the door. She pauses beside the rubbish bin and pulls the pastries out of her bag. Without a second's thought, Abigail throws them in the bin and leaves the dressing room.

27

**INT. BOARDING HOUSE/TARA'S ROOM - NIGHT 12**

27

TARA, KAT, SAMMY, ETHAN

Sammy sits beside Tara on the bed, arms crossed in front of himself. Kat is doing the hard sell.

SAMMY

No way.

KAT

I'm shocked you could be so selfish.

SAMMY

It'd be like kissing my sister.

TARA

(touched)

You think of me as a sister?

KAT

Come on Sammy, we've seen you in action. You're an expert.

Sammy contemplates this with false modesty.

SAMMY

I have been told I'm pretty talented.

KAT

And one of your best friends is floundering.

Tara doesn't want to do it either but it's her best option.

TARA

She's right. I'm desperate.

Sammy looks at her, caving.

SAMMY

Okay I'll do it for you. But this is wrong.

TARA

Oh agreed. Very wrong.

Kat choreographs them, enjoying this way too much. Tara and Sammy obey reluctantly.

KAT

All right shuffle closer. Now lean in.

Sammy and Tara both burst out into nervous laughter.

TARA

I can't do this.

SAMMY

Should we have a rule? Like no tongues?

KAT

Then it's not a proper practice. Focus, on three. One, two...

This time Tara and Sammy take it seriously. As their lips are about to meet, Tara hears a sound.

She looks up. Ethan is standing in the doorway. He doesn't see Kat, who's standing behind the door, but he does see Tara, milliseconds away from kissing Sammy. They lock eyes for a moment and then Ethan walks away.

28     EXT. NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DANCE - DAY 13  
NIL CAST

28

It's a new day and the Academy is bathed in light.

29     INT. ACADEMY/CORRIDOR/STUDIO - DAY 13  
TARA, ETHAN, N/S STUDENTS

29

The corridors are once again filled with nervous students preparing to go into their various exams.

Tara is ready for Ethan's choreography assessment. She's feeling sick about the night before. They're both waiting outside the door to the studio. His eyes are fixed straight ahead.

ETHAN

If it's too fast in the menage you can do singles. (adjust)

TARA

Thanks. Doubles should be fine.

Tara summons up her courage.

TARA

About last night, I wanted to explain... (what you saw wasn't a real kiss)

Ethan laughs, cutting her off.

ETHAN

You don't need to explain anything. It's not like we're... (a thing)

TARA

No of course.

They wait in silence for an awkward moment.

ETHAN

(cold)  
I just didn't pick you for a game player, that's all.

TARA

Me? I've never played a game in my entire life.

ETHAN

(under his breath)  
Yeah. Keep telling yourself that.

29

CONTINUED:

29

Now Tara is becoming annoyed.

TARA

Hang on. You're the one who ignores me for an eternity and then on the rebound... (makes a move)

ETHAN

(over)

You made my palms sweat, okay? And I got sick in the stomach - I'm never sick - apparently that means I...

The door opens and we hear Mr. Kennedy's voice.

MR KENNEDY (O.S.)

Third Year Choreography.

TARA

You what?

ETHAN

Liked you or something. Past tense.

Ethan walks inside, not looking back. Tara stares, totally crushed, and then follows him in.

30

**INT. ACADEMY/GIRLS' DRESSING ROOM - DAY 13**

30

TARA, ABIGAIL, KAT, N/S FIRST YEARS (GIRLS)

Abigail is sitting on the bench in the dressing room, not talking to anyone as the first years prepare for their final exams. She looks ghostly, like she doesn't have the energy to change her clothes much less dance, as the world rushes all around her.

Tara enters and heads straight over to Kat who's eating a chocolate bar by the lockers.

KAT

How did it go?

TARA

The dancing part was fine.

Kat winces at the expression on her friend's face. They shut up as Abigail approaches the locker.

ABIGAIL

Sorry, I'm just getting my shoes.

Kat stares, weirded out, as Abigail grabs her pointe shoes from the locker and leaves the dressing room without a word.



30

CONTINUED:

30

KAT

What's with her?

Tara shrugs as she starts changing out of her costume.

TARA

I've got my own problems.

31

**INT. ACADEMY/CORRIDOR - DAY 13**

31

TARA, CHRISTIAN, N/S STUDENTS

Christian is leaning against the wall, waiting for Tara as she emerges from the dressing room, dressed for the pas de deux exam in her practice tutu. She takes a deep breath.

TARA

You ready? Last exam.

Christian nods. They trudge together down the hall towards the studio.

CHRISTIAN

(smirks)

So you and Lieberman...

TARA

Nothing happened. As you may recall, I am the oldest kissing virgin in the world. That still hasn't changed.

Christian shakes his head and laughs.

CHRISTIAN

Training bra, why do you make it so complicated?

TARA

Are you serious? It's a minefield.

CHRISTIAN

Nah. When you're kissing the right person it's always simple.

Tara stops in her tracks. She stares at Christian, a moment of connection between them. For once, he's said something that makes sense.

CHRISTIAN

What?

TARA

I'll see you in there.

31

CONTINUED:

31

With her mind made up, she races off down the corridor.

CHRISTIAN

You're going to be late.

But Tara keeps running, knowing exactly what she has to do.

32

**EXT. ACADEMY/WHARFSIDE - DAY 13**

32

TARA, ETHAN, KAT, CHRISTIAN, TARA (V.O)

Tara bursts outside into the fresh air. She looks around. She can't see Ethan anywhere. And then suddenly there he is. Standing by himself, deep in thought.

TARA (V.O.)

*Sometimes, when the pressure gets too much there's only one thing for it.*

Ethan glances at Tara as she approaches. He's still annoyed.

ETHAN

Look there's nothing to... (talk about)

Tara doesn't take the time to be scared. She grabs his hand, pulls him towards her, and kisses him square on the mouth. As they break apart, Tara is grinning.

TARA

I just kissed you.

ETHAN

I noticed. But what about... (Lieberman)

TARA

Sammy was a practice. I didn't want you to know that I've never done it before. I wanted it to be right. And I wasn't sure I was ready.

ETHAN

And now you're...(sure)?

She kisses him again.

TARA

Yup. So how am I doing? Out of ten?

32

CONTINUED:

32

In response Ethan kisses her again and this time it's a proper pash. The world is spinning and we're travelling around them. Total movie moment.

CROSS TO:

Kat and Christian have appeared on the steps, watching the public display of affection. Kat looks grossed out, Christian looks... something else.

KAT

Weird. Like I'm happy for them but...

CHRISTIAN

Still weird.

33

**INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 13**

33

TARA, KAT, SAMMY, CHRISTIAN, ABIGAIL, MISS RAINE, PATRICK, N/S ASSESSOR, N/S FIRST YEARS (BOYS AND GIRLS)

The pas de deux exam is about to begin. At the front of the studio, the panel is watching with eagle eyes.

Tara takes her place beside Christian in the centre.

CHRISTIAN

No pash rash?

TARA

(grins)

I think I have a boyfriend.

The music begins and they start to dance, moving perfectly as one, conquering each moment. Tara has never looked happier.

CROSS TO:

Sammy is standing beside Abigail on the sidelines, waiting for their turn. Her face looks wan and there are dark-rings under her eyes.

SAMMY

How are you feeling?

ABIGAIL

Never better.

Abigail smiles, tightly, but Sammy sees through her.

SAMMY

Abigail, this isn't right. We should tell someone.

ABIGAIL

No. You promised. Remember?

She stares Sammy down. He wishes he hadn't.

The music changes and they step out into the centre of the studio. Their performance is adequate but not as good as the rehearsal the night before. This time Sammy is dancing well but Abigail is shaky. It seems like it's taking all her energy just to stay on her feet.

They reach the shoulder lift. Sammy is ready but Abigail misjudges it. She almost slips through Sammy's hands.

ABIGAIL

(whispers)

Sorry.

Sammy manages to cover the mistake by turning it into a different move. However, Miss Raine has noticed from her place on the panel.

MISS RAINE

Stop the music.

Miss Raine walks down towards Sammy and Abigail.

MISS RAINE

(quietly)

Abigail, this isn't like you. Go back and start again please. And this time, for your sake, put some life into it.

Abigail nods. As she turns away from the panel, her composure slips and we see how fragile she really is. There's a buzzing sound; the sound of blood rushing to her head.

ABIGAIL

Bees.

Sammy hovers beside her. He's now extremely worried.

SAMMY

What?

ABIGAIL

I remembered what happens when I get nervous. I hear bees.

The music begins again, but it's drowned out by the buzzing. As they step into their first movement, Abigail collapses.

Instant panic. The world feels unsteady, like it's underwater. Like a bad dream, everything sounds as if it's coming from a long way off.

Tara watches as Miss Raine rushes down towards Abigail.

MISS RAINE  
Someone get the doctor.

Christian races out.

MISS RAINE  
Does anyone know what's wrong with her?

Miss Raine is looking straight at Tara.

THUD. Tara shakes her head. Afraid, with no real answers.

THUD. Beside her Kat turns away, not able to look.

THUD. Sammy stares at Abigail's collapsed body. Her eyes are starting to open but stare vacant, she still hasn't moved.

CUT TO BLACK

END OF EPISODE.