EXT. MOUNTAINS/CAMPGROUNDS/ENTRANCE - DAY 9
TARA, KAT, PETRA, CHRISTIAN, SAMMY, ABIGAIL, SEAN, PATRICK, BONNIE, HAZEL, FIRST YEAR GIRL, MISS HISTEAD, N/S STUDENTS, TARA (V.O.)

It’s midday in the sapphire-misted mountains, a world away from the Academy. A hired mini-bus has pulled up to the entrance of the Campgrounds. First Year students are piling off, all looking a little worse for wear.

Patrick is unloading their bags out of the luggage compartment.

PATRICK
Okay, you have an hour to pitch tents and get organised. We’re going to spend the afternoon working.

Sammy bolts through the students, panicked.

SAMMY
Toilet sir?

PATRICK
Third tree to your left.

Sammy looks pained but has no choice except to make a bolt for it.

Petra is standing with Kat by the bus, both wearing clothes much more appropriate for the city than the bush.

PETRA
(about Sammy)
Should he be worried about brown snakes?

KAT
The real danger’s drop bears.
Imagine koalas, only flesh-eating.

Petra looks up to the trees, alarmed by the dangers of the Australian bush. Hiding a smile, Kat glances at the bus where Tara is the last to get off, alone. Tara forces a smile, hoping to share the joke, but Kat looks away.

PATRICK
Three people to a tent so pick your sleeping buddies.

SEAN
(eager)
I choose Kat!

She winces as the other boys whistle.
PATRICK
Boys you’re on the other side of the hill.

As Patrick starts handing out tents, Tara looks around. The other students are quickly gathering into groups of threes – she watches as another FIRST YEAR GIRL joins Bonnie and Hazel.

TARA (V.O.)
The first thing I can remember loving, besides my family, was a lamb.

KAT (O.S.)
Guess you’re with us.

Tara turns around, but any flicker of hope is dashed as she sees that Kat is talking to Abigail, who is slapping a mosquito on her arm.

KAT
Will you be doing that all night?

ABIGAIL
They’re attracted to my blood type.

The girls don’t seem to notice that Tara exists as they grab their belongings and start heading towards the campgrounds.

TARA (V.O.)
Its mother had died and so every morning I got up at five to bottle-feed it. Each day I rushed home after school to see if it had missed me.

Patrick hands Tara the last bag out of the luggage compartment. He smiles kindly.

PATRICK
If you’re homeless Ms Histead won’t mind sharing.

Tara nods weakly. She hoists her backpack over her shoulder and begins to trudge towards the campgrounds.

TARA (V.O.)
One day I was in a hurry to get to ballet and I left the gate open.

Tara reaches the campsite. She stops as she sees Kat and Petra laughing as they attempt to erect their tent. Even Abigail is part of the fun, as she struggles to hold the centre pole in its place. None of them have a clue what they’re doing.
TARA (V.O.)
When we got home there was blood everywhere. The dogs had gotten in, my lamb was gone.

The tent falls down on top of them, more laughter. Tara turns away and heads towards the other side of the campgrounds.

TARA (V.O.)
It was the first time I understood my actions could have consequences.

Tara reaches the tent that Ms Histead is efficiently erecting. She sets her backpack down. It’s then that she notices a piece of paper taped to the side. It’s a photocopy of a photograph – the one of her kissing Christian beside the Harbour. (From Episode 15)

TARA (V.O.)
That sometimes when you make a mistake you have to live with it forever.

Tara gently tears the photo off and stares down at it. In a FLASH OF WHITE LIGHT WE FLASHBACK TO:

INT. ACADEMY/CORRIDOR – DAY 7
TARA, SAMMY, KAT, PETRA, MS HISTEAD, N/S STUDENTS

Another photocopy of exactly the same photo is taped to the inside of Tara’s locker. She looks around, anxiously trying to work out who put it there.

It’s a busy day at the Academy. Students are walking by in all directions. It could have been anyone. Tara rips the photo off and screws it up as Sammy approaches. He takes one look at her face.

SAMMY
What’s that?

TARA
Nothing.

Sammy doesn’t believe her. Tara reluctantly hands over the photo. He’s shocked.

TARA
I just found it in my locker.

Tara grabs her stuff and they start walking down the corridor. Kat and Petra are up ahead, laughing at a joke.

TARA
I know it’s her.
Tara indicates to Kat.

**SAMMY**

No you don’t.

(off Tara’s look)
Okay, she’s not president of your fan club right now but she wouldn’t...

**TARA**

Freeze me out? Not listen to my zillion apologies?

**SAMMY**

I think there’s stuff going on with her that we don’t know.

But Tara’s not listening.

**TARA**

I made one bad judgment call and now I’m the enemy.

Sammy thinks it’s time to tell Tara some home truths.

**SAMMY**

What did you expect, T? Her brother was off limits but you went out with him anyway. And then you...

**TARA**

Cheated on him? Say it. There’s pictorial evidence.

Tara’s face is a wall of hurt, betrayed by Sammy as well.

**SAMMY**

I’m not taking sides.

Kat chooses that moment to call out to him from down the corridor.

**KAT**

Yo Sam-boy, you gotta hear this story.

Sammy is visibly torn.

**TARA**

Yeah. You’re Switzerland.

The English teacher, MS HISTEAD, passes Sammy.

**MS HISTEAD**

My classroom Mr Lieberman. Five minutes.
Sammy glances between Kat and Tara and feels a strange sense of relief.

**SAMMY**

You know I can’t wait.

**INT. ACADEMY/CLASSROOM – DAY 7**

**ABIGAIL, SAMMY, MS HISTEAD**

Sammy and Abigail hover in front of Ms Histead’s desk, avoiding eye contact with each other as she pours miso soup mix into a mug of hot water.

**ABIGAIL**

Will this take long?

**MS HISTEAD**

Shouldn’t.

Ms Histead blows on her soup as if she has all the time in the world. Abigail and Sammy watch, oddly transfixed.

**ABIGAIL**

Because we have contemporary.

**MS HISTEAD**

You’ll be on your way as soon as you hand in your assignment.

Abigail’s nose wrinkles in distaste.

**ABIGAIL**

Oh that. I have a note.

As Abigail rummages through her bag, Ms Histead hands Sammy a pile of notes, focused on her seaweed.

**MS HISTEAD**

Would you read them for us?

**SAMMY**

Sure.

Sammy is confused but looks down at the notes.

**SAMMY**

(reads)

Abigail was unable to complete her assignment due to eyestrain.

Sammy darts a look at Abigail as he flicks to the next note.

**SAMMY**

(reads)

Abigail was unable... due to a bruised typing finger.
Ms Histead hurries him along. He keeps flicking.

**SAMMY**
(reads)
Tonsillitis, bronchitis, dermatitis...

Sammy glances sideways, hoping it’s not contagious.

**MS HISTEAD**
Interesting none of these conditions have stopped you dancing.

Abigail hasn’t enjoyed this dressing down. She meets Ms Histead’s gaze, unapologetic.

**ABIGAIL**
I preserve my energy for what’s important.

**MS HISTEAD**
Funny what different people find important, isn’t it? I think it’s important that you’re failing English and if that continues I’ll keep you down next year no matter how well you dance.

**ABIGAIL**
You wouldn’t.

She clearly would. Ms Histead writes something on an assignment booklet.

**MS HISTEAD**
Before you go on camp you will submit a new essay on A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Sammy is going to be your tutor.

**SAMMY**
I am? Not sure I’m the best person.

**MS HISTEAD**
According to Miss Raine you are both on detention so instead of doing that tonight...

Ms Histead hands Abigail the assignment.

**MS HISTEAD**
I own your derrieres.
Contemporary/Acro class: The First Years have divided into their usual pas de deux pairs. They’re working on crash mats, practising handstands, balances and walkovers while their partner spots them.

Patrick walks around the various couples, starting with Sean who is lying on his back with his legs in the air. Kat is balancing with her stomach on his feet.

**PATRICK**
In two days time when you’re surrounded by nature...

**KAT**
Why are we ditching civilisation again?

Patrick re-positions them so that they’re at eye level with each other.

**PATRICK**
Inspiration. You’re going to be dancing in the open air, workshopping variations from A Midsummer Night’s Dream.

Abigail wrinkles her nose as Sammy goes into a handstand, forcing her to hold his feet.

**PATRICK**
There are some acrobatic elements in the modern version. Skills you may need if you’re thinking about joining a contemporary company.

Sammy finishes the handstand and it’s Abigail’s turn.

**SAMMY**
Your worst nightmare huh? Camping, acro, outside your comfort zone.

He watches stunned as Abigail effortlessly executes a perfect forward walkover. And then another, and another, each time getting faster until she flips into an aerial.

**ABIGAIL**
Sylvie Guillem used to be a gymnast.

Off Sammy’s look.
ABIGAIL
World’s best dancer.

CROSS TO:

The other side of the room where Tara and Christian are working together in silence, apart from the others. The tension between them is palpable.

Tara begins to arch into a backbend but stops herself.

TARA
Sorry.

CHRISTIAN
I’ll catch you if you slip.

Tara takes a deep breath and goes backward into the arch. Christian is there to support the small of her back.

KAT (O.S.)
Aw adorable. Did you hear that.

From the arch, Tara looks over to see Kat who has stopped practising and is now watching with Petra.

KAT
He’s going to catch her.

SEAN
Catch her or catch something off her?

PETRA
Sean!

Christian leans down to whisper in Tara’s ear.

CHRISTIAN
Ignore them.

Tara goes to kick her legs over but she’s lost strength and falls flat on her back.

Tara lies there winded. Like Sleeping Beauty, not wanting to get up for at least one hundred years.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE – DAY 7

Establish the Boarding House in the late afternoon sunlight.
Tara is walking by herself across the grass near the Boarding House. She notices Ethan up ahead, boisterously playing hacky sack with Tim and some other Third Years.

Tara goes to give them a wide berth when the sack lands at her feet. She doesn’t know what to do, except pick it up and take it over.

**TIM**  
(sotto)  
Mate. Awkward

Ethan turns around. His jaw tightens imperceptibly as he sees Tara approaching.

**TARA**  
(to Ethan)  
Hi.

She tries to smile, nervous. Ethan gives nothing back.

**TARA**  
Can I talk to you?

**TIM**  
(calling out)  
Kick it!

Tara tries to kick the hacky sack to Tim. It goes way off. The boys complain about her pathetic attempt.

**TARA**  
Just for a moment?

Ethan is reluctant but lets her lead him slightly away from the others.

**ETHAN**  
Yeah?

**TARA**  
I’ve been carrying this around. I thought...

Tara pulls the necklace he gave her out of her pocket.

**TARA**  
I don’t know if you can return it or anything...

**ETHAN**  
Forget it.
TARA
But it’s not right -

ETHAN
(laughs)
Trust me. It wasn’t expensive.

ISABELLE (O.S.)
Golden boy, waiting for you.

Tara turns around to see Isabelle approaching.

ISABELLE
(friendly)
Hey Tara.

TARA
(slowly)
Hi. So you’re back?

Isabelle pulls a face.

ISABELLE
Yeah, exchange was nuts. The Russians massacre you in technique class.

She glances sideways at Ethan.

ISABELLE
I actually missed this place a lot the past few months.

ETHAN
(grins)
Liar. You just missed me.

Tara watches revolted as Ethan kisses Isabelle right in front of her. Ethan finally turns back to her, the picture of politeness.

ETHAN
Sorry, was there something you wanted?

Tara stares at him. He’s doing an excellent job of pretending there was nothing between them.

TARA
No. I’ll, um... See you in detention.

Tara musters a smile at Isabelle and leaves. She hears their voices trailing behind her as they re-join the game.
ISABELLE
(laughs)
Did something happen with her while I was away?

ETHAN
No. Okay, nothing serious.

Isabelle whacks him, mock angry.

ISABELLE
Such a player.

Ethan is grinning but as he glances back at Tara we see a crack in his bravado. He’s hurting more than he’s letting on.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE/COMMON ROOM – NIGHT 7

ABIGAIL, SAMMY, N/S STUDENTS

Students are hanging out in the common room, throwing darts and playing pool. Sammy has spread his books and laptop out over the coffee table and is fidgeting impatiently. He’s clearly irritated as Abigail enters.

SAMMY
I said six o’clock. It’s six-thirty.

Abigail shoots him a look as she sits down beside him.

ABIGAIL
Struggling to care, but you seem to have a problem with me at the moment. Is it just pms or -

SAMMY
My problem is that I’m the UN. Kat blames Tara, Tara blames Kat and do you wanna know who I blame?

There’s an unusual absence of warmth in Sammy’s tone. A flicker of remorse crosses Abigail’s face.

SAMMY
You didn’t need to send that photo. And if you’re harassing Tara with them now -

ABIGAIL
What? Like I could be bothered with the melodrama.

Abigail looks around.

ABIGAIL
So where’s my assignment?
The audacity of the question slowly dawns on Sammy.

**SAMMY**
Huh? I’m not going to do it for...
(you)

**ABIGAIL**
It’s your detention too. And we’ll both be out of here faster.

**SAMMY**
Look, I’ll watch you do it and give you some pointers. But if you’re failing you’ve got to learn -

Abigail’s expression has turned to broken glass. She reaches for Sammy’s laptop.

**ABIGAIL**
Fine. Do you mind?

He shakes his head as she starts typing.

**ABIGAIL**
If you’re not going to help me properly I’d rather you didn’t watch. It’s creepy.
(beat)
Run along. I’ll be fine by myself.

Sammy gives up and leaves. Abigail stares at the screen - all that’s written is indecipherable rubbish. She holds down delete clearing the screen, confidence faltering.

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**INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - NIGHT 7**

TARA, CHRISTIAN, ETHAN, KAT, PETRA,

Nightly detention is being conducted in the studio. Kat and Petra are washing the mirrors, giggling quietly together.

Tara and Christian are scrubbing scuff marks off the floor with toothbrushes.

Ethan is polishing the barres, trying to ignore everyone as he suffers the humiliation of being stuck with the First Years.

**PETRA**
You know, if this was a movie we’d have a water fight now.

She holds her sponge, hopefully. The air is thick with tension and no one says anything - this is definitely not a movie. They all go back to what they were doing.

Tara feels something on her back. She turns around.
TARA
What are you -

Christian shows her another photocopy of the photo of them kissing, subtly so that the others don’t notice.

CHRISTIAN
(quietly)
It was on your... (back)

He screws the photo up.

CHRISTIAN
(quietly, concerned)
You okay?

Tara nods, not wanting to talk about it. She goes back to scrubbing the floor - alienated, friendless, miserable.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE/TARA’S ROOM – NIGHT 7
TARA, ABIGAIL

It’s the middle of the night as Tara lies staring up at the ceiling, unable to sleep.

TARA
You know technically it’s not always darkest before dawn. They just say that.

ABIGAIL
Thanks for the weather report.

Abigail is huddled up in the next bed, staring at her still blank computer screen.

ABIGAIL
So when is it? Darkest?

TARA
Middle of the night. Probably around now.

Both girls process this as they go back to staring at their respective spaces.

EXT. SYDNEY HARBOUR – TIME LAPSE
NIL CAST

Night finally turns into day over the shimmering Harbour.
TARA, CHRISTIAN, ETHAN, ISABELLE, BONNIE, HAZEL, N/S STUDENTS

Tara arrives at the cafe, carrying her breakfast tray. She stops on the outskirts and surveys the scene.

Her eyes first fall on Ethan and Isabelle, laughing and flirting as Ethan feeds her a spoonful of his fruit salad.

Tara’s gaze flicks over to Christian, buying a coffee at the cart. She looks away quickly - that’s a no-go zone as well.

Tara looks around - there must be someone she can talk to. Her eyes alight on Bonnie and Hazel, two girls in First Year, dressed almost identically, who finish each other’s sentences. Tara makes a split-second decision and walks towards their table.

TARA
Hi. Bonnie, Hazel.

Bonnie and Hazel look up at her, surprised.

BONNIE
I’m Bonnie. She’s Hazel.

TARA
Right. Of course.

Tara sits down beside them.

TARA
You don’t mind if I join you? I feel like we’ve never had a proper conversation.

The girls stare, confused and a bit surprised she’s talking to them. Tara keeps trying.

TARA
So are you guys excited about camp?

HAZEL
Yeah.

The girls look at each other and dissolve into giggles.

BONNIE
(explaining)
We have this game that we play...

HAZEL
It’s like a ballet pop quiz.
BONNIE
And if you get the wrong answer you have to eat something super disgusting. Like -

HAZEL
Jam and vegemite sandwiches.

BONNIE
Or...

TARA
The pus from your blisters.

The girls look at Tara askance.

BONNIE
No that’s probably too disgusting.

HAZEL
And unhygienic.

Tara realises her new friends have no sense of humour.

TARA
I was just... joking.

BONNIE
Anyway, we’re going to play on the bus to camp.

HAZEL
The whole way, unless one of us gets motion-sick.

The girls are obviously excited in their supremely ballet-nerdy way.

TARA
Wow. Maybe... I could join you?

Tara smiles at the girls, trying to convince them, not to mention herself, that she means it.

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 8

KAT, SEAN, PETRA, N/S FIRST YEARS (GIRLS AND BOYS)

Contemporary Class (Warm Up): Petra is stretching on the floor, pretending not to listen to the conversation that is happening beside her.

Kat is looking up at Sean who stands above her. A look of horror mixed with intrigue etched all over her face.
KAT
I’m sorry. I should go out with you why?

SEAN
You can’t deny there’s something between us.

KAT
Something other than your sleaze and my casual loathing?

Sean crouches down beside Kat and opens up. It’s a side of him we’ve never seen.

SEAN
Kat you’re sad. And I think, I know, I can make you happy.

It’s actually quite sweet and Kat feels an unwanted tug on her heartstrings.

SEAN
Don’t say anything now. I’m going to prove it to you - the wheels are already in motion.

He flashes Kat a smile as he walks over to the other side of the studio.

PETRA
(amused)
So that was a proper declaration.

KAT
Real feelings. And I just couldn’t kill the slobby hope in his eyes.

Kat is annoyed with herself that she couldn’t flat-out reject him. The girls watch as Sean walks on his hands, obviously trying to impress her.

PETRA
You know, I’ve never understood the whole crush thing.

Still upside down, Sean lifts a hand and waves at the girls. Sean loses his balance and crashes to the ground.

PETRA
(making a face)
What makes someone behave that way?

KAT
(surprised)
That’s my line. Tara would normally...
PETRA
Would normally what?

Kat shakes her head, re-focusing.

KAT
Nothing. It is a relief not to be obsessing over these things.

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 8

KAT, PETRA, SEAN, TARA, SAMMY, CHRISTIAN, ABIGAIL, PATRICK, N/S FIRST YEARS (BOYS AND GIRLS)

Contemporary class: Christian, Tara, Kat and Sean are on the floor. There’s no music as they learn the beginnings of a dance. Christian partners Tara, Sean partners Kat.

The rest of the class stand on the sidelines. Patrick talks them through their roles.

PATRICK
Okay, Midsummer Night’s Dream; the star-crossed lovers.

Patrick points to Kat.

PATRICK
Kat - you’re dancing Hermia. Feisty, funny and betrothed to Sean.

Sean grins at her - see? Kat smiles weakly.

PATRICK
Except he’s in love with your best friend.

Patrick indicates Tara who is paired with Christian.

PATRICK
The sweet Helena.

SEAN
(to Kat)
Hand to heart, would never happen.

PATRICK
Helena’s in love with Christian and he feels the same way about her.

Tara and Christian avoid eye contact.

KAT
Delightful!
(under her breath)
Someone cue the vomit.
Bored, Abigail pipes up from the sidelines.

ABIGAIL
Who am I Sir?

PATRICK
(smiles)
Puck. The one who makes it worse, before it gets better.

Sammy is also on the sidelines.

SAMMY
(grumbles)
Now that’s typecasting.

PATRICK
The point you have to remember is that while most of the ballet is about mixed signals and misunderstandings, in the end true love wins out.

The couples continue to follow Patrick as he teaches them the choreography, no one other than Sean enjoying themselves.

EXT. SYDNEY - DAY 8
NIL CAST

In a series of quick cuts we see the hustle and bustle of Circular Quay. Seagulls devouring a packet of chips. Buskers performing. A ferry departing.

INT. ACADEMY/CLASSROOM - DAY 8
TARA, KAT, SAMMY, CHRISTIAN, ABIGAIL, PETRA, SEAN, MS HISTEAD, BONNIE, HAZEL, N/S FIRST YEARS (BOYS AND GIRLS)

INT. TELEVISION (CHRISTIAN/TARA PHOTO STORY INSERT)
CHRISTIAN, TARA

CLASSROOM: Back inside, the First Years are piling into their seats. Tara is sitting in the middle, with her bags on the desks beside her. She smiles widely as Bonnie and Hazel appear at the door.

TARA
Bonnie, Hazel! Saved you some seats.

The girls amble over.
HAZEL
I’m Hazel. She’s Bonnie.

TARA
Right.

Kat and Petra enter the classroom. Kat clocks Bonnie and Hazel sitting down with Tara. She feels a momentary pang of jealousy.

CROSS TO:

Ms Histead’s desk: Abigail is handing in her assignment. Sammy listens from the front row.

MS HISTEAD
On time and the correct length. I should go into matchmaking.

Sammy goes to response but Abigail beats him to it.

ABIGAIL
Yes, I really couldn’t have done it without him.

Sammy looks at Abigail sharply, surprised. She doesn’t meet his eye and walks towards her seat.

Ms Histead stands and addresses the class.

MS HISTEAD
Okay noble dancers - lend me your ears.

Christian scrapes through the door at the last moment before she closes it.

MS HISTEAD
We’re continuing your Shakespeare immersion. I’m going to show an excerpt from a film... if I can just get this working.

Ms Histead attempts to use the remote. She struggles to see the functions.

MS HISTEAD
I want you to tell me how it contrasts with the text.

TELEVISION: A picture appears on the television screen but it’s not from A Midsummer Night’s Dream. It’s the photo of Tara and Christian, now a photo story set to soppy music.

CLASSROOM: Sean wolf whistles from his seat at the back.
What -

TELEVISION: The image dissolves to the same shot at different magnifications, then pans along Tara’s and Christian’s faces.

CLASSROOM: The students laugh and whistle. Kat’s jaw is clenched. Tara has frozen. She’s white as a ghost.

Who put this in here?

Ms Histead tries to hit stop but can’t operate the remote properly. Christian gets out of his seat and hits stop on the dvd player.

Thank you.
(to the class)
Pay attention because I don’t find this remotely funny. Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated.

During this, Tara has gotten up out of her seat and has silently left the classroom. Kat watches her go, guilty and conflicted.

Christian is racing after Tara as she strides down the track beside the Harbour, leaving the Academy and everything in it behind.

Wait, training bra.

He’s out of breath as he catches up to her. Tara is frustrated beyond belief and doesn’t stop.

What do you want from me?
Seriously, go pash Kat.

That was a mistake.

Whoever. I don’t care. You’re making it worse, just leave me alone!

No.
TARA
What?

CHRISTIAN
I’m sick of leaving you alone. I like you Tara.
(beat)
I mean, probably you’re the most annoying person I’ve ever met.

Tara goes to interject but Christian ignores her.

CHRISTIAN
And a lot of the time I don’t want to be around you.

His voice gets softer as he really opens up to her for the very first time.

CHRISTIAN
But then other times you’re the only person... And I like you.

This is the most we’ve ever heard Christian speak at once and now Tara can’t. It’s like the wind has been knocked out of her again.

CHRISTIAN
So yeah... Ball’s in your court.

He turns and walks away from Tara, leaving her to process this.

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - NIGHT 8

ABIGAIL, SAMMY

It’s night in the studio as Abigail practises her Puck solo. Her hair is loose and her feet are bare. The variation incorporates acrobatics with contemporary.

Sammy watches at the door for a moment. How can someone so beautiful be so evil? Abigail starts as she spots him in the mirror. Breathing hard, she flicks off the stereo.

ABIGAIL
Must you lurk in the shadows?

SAMMY
Guilty conscience?

Sammy shows her that he’s holding his laptop.

SAMMY
So I read your essay. It’s good.
(beat)
(MORE)
CONTINUED:

SAMMY (CONT'D)
Although, as your tutor, I probably would’ve advised you to change a few more words. Pretty easy to work out it was copied straight off the net.

ABIGAIL
It wasn’t like I had a choice.

Abigail’s eyes flash at Sammy, obviously blaming him. He can’t believe how unfair this is.

SAMMY
You’re seriously blaming me? I’m about to get done for cheating as well because you couldn’t be bothered -

ABIGAIL
Actually, I tried -

SAMMY
Yeah right.

ABIGAIL
And I couldn’t do it. Look, I know my strengths and my weaknesses. And I’m fine with them. I put my energy into what I’m good at.

She gestures to the studio.

SAMMY
That’s such a cop out.

Abigail hides her vulnerability.

ABIGAIL
Not really. You obviously think I’m stupid, otherwise you wouldn’t have checked to see if I cheated.

She’s got Sammy there. Abigail flicks the stereo back on and continues dancing, blocking him out.

EXT. ACADEMY/CAFE - DAY 9

TARA, BONNIE, HAZEL, N/S FIRST YEARS (GIRLS AND BOYS)

It’s very early morning as bleary-eyed First Years eat breakfast in the cafe. They’re dressed in civvies, with their bags packed for camp beside them.

Tara arrives, loaded down with her backpack and plastic bags full of food. She walks straight up to Bonnie and Hazel.
TARA
Bonnie, Hazel.

Tara’s made sure she’s got it right this time. She’s smiling determinedly as she pulls tins out of the bags.

TARA
Couldn’t sleep so I raided the pantry. Ladies we have a fish theme for our quiz today. Smoked oysters. Sardines. Anchovies. Coming at you.

Bonnie and Hazel avoid Tara’s gaze as she sits down. Tara finally notices they’re not quite sharing her excitement.

TARA
What? Anchovies pushing the boundaries because they’re... (not that bad)

BONNIE
No, it’s just...

Bonnie and Hazel exchange a glance.

BONNIE
We talked about it and we don’t think you should sit with us on the bus today.

TARA
Sorry?

HAZEL
It’s not that we don’t think you’re a nice person, it’s just...

BONNIE
We’re not sure you’re good for our reputation.

Tara stares at the two girls in their near-matching outfits.

HAZEL
Plus we don’t want to risk destabilising our friendship unit.

TARA
Uh-huh. Of course.

Tara stands up, teeth gritted. She goes to walk away and then changes her mind.

TARA
I’m going to take the fish.

Tara grabs the plastic bags and leaves the cafe.
INT. ACADEMY/CORRIDOR – DAY 9

TARA

Tara enters the empty Academy, dimly lit in the early morning light.

Clutching her backpack and the bags of food, she walks down the corridor. Tara looks around – the walls are papered with the dreaded photo of her and Christian. It’s taunting her from every angle. There really is no place to hide.

She starts ripping them down, one after another after another until they all blur into one and with another FLASH OF WHITE LIGHT WE RETURN TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINS/CAMPGROUNDS/TEACHERS’ TENT – DAY 9

TARA, MS HISTEAD

We’re back at camp and Ms Histead has almost finished pitching the tent. She looks over to Tara.

MS HISTEAD
Roommate! Come and put your country skills to use.

But anger has built during Tara’s memory. She drops her backpack, whirls around and strides away.

EXT. MOUNTAINS/CAMPGROUNDS/CAMPFIRE – DAY 9

KAT, PETRA, TARA, SEAN, N/S FIRST YEARS (GIRLS AND BOYS)

Kat and Petra are sitting on a log by the lit campfire. Petra is searching the trees for signs of drop bears.

PETRA
So when the bears drop...

KAT
It’s more like a pounce, when you’re not looking.

SEAN (O.S.)
Kat!

KAT
(grimacing)
Kinda like that.

Kat turns around, endeavouring to muster a smile, as she sees Sean approaching.

KAT
Hey Sean.
SEAN
Have you thought about what I asked?

As Kat tries to think on her feet, Tara strides over and shoves the photo in her face.

TARA
You have to stop.

KAT
Excuse me. Sean and I were having a conversation -

But Tara is too mad to be brushed aside.

TARA
I get that we’ll never be friends again but you can’t keep attacking me... (with this)

KAT
Like I could be bothered. In my mind you don’t even exist.

As they continue to fight (in the background) Petra and Sean edge away from the onslaught.

PETRA
Are you sure you want to get involved in this?

KAT
And it’s so predictable that you think the world revolves around you.

SEAN
She’s beautiful when she’s mad.

TARA
It’s hard not to when you’re waging a personal vendetta against me.

EXT. MOUNTAINS/FOREST GLADE - DAY 9

In an almost as beautiful forest clearing, contemporary music is playing. Tara, Christian and Sean dance the choreographed sequence where Demetrius and Lysander are fighting over Helena’s (Tara’s) affections. They’re all wearing simple costumes, Tara has a wreath of flowers in her hair.

Patrick watches from down the front. The other students sit beside him.

PATRICK
Boys remember, you’re both in love with Tara. She’s the one you’re fighting over.
On the sidelines, Kat rolls her eyes. She’s also wearing a wreath of flowers, in a different colour.

PATRICK
Okay, now Kat. You spot what’s happening and try to stop it.

Kat runs onto the “stage”. She rips Tara away from the boys and drags her to the back.

The boys remain in the centre, dueling as they try to outdo each other with acrobatic moves.

CUT TO:

BACK OF THE FOREST STAGE: Tara and Kat continue to dance, out of earshot from Patrick and the rest of the audience. It’s a simple sequence, made up of gestures and small steps, where their characters are still antagonistic with each other.

TARA
I don’t get it. I hurt Ethan, not you.

KAT
That’s only part of it.

TARA
Then what’s the rest of it? Is it Christian? Do you –

KAT
No. You’re welcome to each other.

PATRICK
Okay, girls back now into the centre. Bring some energy to it.

CUT TO:

CENTRE OF THE FOREST “STAGE”: The girls run back into the centre. They’re simultaneously picked up by the boys and “fight” with each other mid-air, legs kicking out behind them.

KAT
You have everything. And you rub it in my face.

PATRICK (O.S.)
Good Kat.

Kat and Tara are lowered back on the ground. Their characters continue to fight, shoving each other comically.
TARA
I’m so over that self-righteous attitude.

PATRICK (O.S.)
Good Tara.

KAT
I am not self-righteous.

TARA
Your problems aren’t real. They just happen in your head.

Kat chooses that moment to shove Tara a bit too hard. She falls down onto the ground. Tara instinctively turns around and grabs Kat’s ankle. She brings her down with her.

PATRICK
Less good girls. Stay with the choreography.

But the girls have stopped listening. It’s obvious neither has been in a fight before as they clumsily wrestle on the ground.

Kat tries to free herself but Tara gives her hair a sharp tug. Kat gasps, outraged. Kat then returns the favour by tugging Tara’s hair. It’s Tara’s turn to be outraged.

The girls roll on the ground until they land in a puddle and become covered with mud.

Patrick cuts the music. We’ve never seen him so angry.

PATRICK
Enough. Stand up.

The girls drag themselves to their feet.

PATRICK
Katrina, you are on probation and skating on very thin ice.

Tara looks smug, but Patrick isn’t finished.

PATRICK
And Tara, we gave you a scholarship for a reason. This is no way to repay us.

Both girls seem somewhat chastened. Patrick turns to Petra who’s beside him.

PATRICK
Get to the showers. Petra can you please supervise?
EXT. MOUNTAINS/CAMPGROUNDS/OUTDOOR SHOWERS – DAY 9
TARA, KAT, PETRA

Kat and Tara are showering inside the outdoor shower cubicles. They’re separated by a sheet of canvas and can see each other’s heads over the top.

Petra is waiting outside, becoming increasingly irritated as the fight continues.

KAT
You forgot my birthday.

TARA
You left me stranded at the gig so you could go off with Lucas.

KAT
He was my boyfriend. All you did was judge him.

Petra sighs. She calmly starts folding up the girls’ muddy clothes that are strewn beside the cubicles.

TARA
And how did that boyfriend work out for you Kat? Wasn’t I right to judge him?

KAT
I can’t believe you’re bringing that up now! Bottom line is that I needed you and you weren’t there.

Petra has now picked up every stitch of clothing.

PETRA
Actually, the bottom line is that I’m sick of both of you. We all are.

The girls look over to Petra who is holding their clothes.

PETRA
So I’m taking these hostage.

Kat and Tara gape as Petra walks away leaving them naked and stranded, protected only by the canvas showers.

EXT. MOUNTAINS/FOREST GLADE/SIDE-STAGE – DAY 9
SAMMY, ABIGAIL, N/S FIRST YEARS (GIRLS AND BOYS)

Abigail is among the trees on the side of the forest glade, preparing to go on “stage”. She’s wearing a simple Puck costume.
Sammy approaches, carrying a donkey mask. He’s about to say something when he gets distracted by the angry red welt on the side of her face.

SAMMY
Wow I’ve never seen you with a pimple before. It’s like a novelty.

Abigail flicks away his hand.

ABIGAIL
Mosquito bite. You should check your contact lenses.

Abigail pushes past him to take her opening position. Sammy stops her.

SAMMY
Look Abi... I don’t like you a lot of the time but I definitely don’t think you’re stupid.

ABIGAIL
Out of my way Lieberman.

But Sammy blocks her.

SAMMY
I think you’re scared of trying which doesn’t make sense because you’re about to go out there and be fearless.

PATRICK (O.S.)
Abigail? You’re on stage.

SAMMY
In a billion years, I could never be as brilliant as you are.

That’s all Sammy has to say. He steps aside to let Abigail through. She doesn’t straight away.

ABIGAIL
But you just mean dancing.

SAMMY
No I kind of mean everything.

Abigail takes this on board as she runs out onto the forest glade and begins to dance.
TARA, KAT

Tara and Kat have dismantled the canvas screen and have wrapped it around themselves. They’re forced to shuffle together as one unit as they climb the hill, back towards the campgrounds.

TARA
Ow. You’re stepping on my...

KAT
I need more room.

Kat tries to pull the canvas towards her. Tara tugs it back.

TARA
There isn’t more room.

The girls overbalance and start to topple over.

KAT
Watch it.

KAT
Core muscles!

TARA
Core muscles

The girls manage to steady themselves. Almost smiling and puffing hard, they realise that they’ve just about reached the tents. Tara looks more closely and sees a large pair of boy’s shoes left outside one of the tents.

TARA
(irritated)
Great, this is the boys’ side.

KAT
Doesn’t matter. We just need clothes.

Tara is surprised as Kat takes charge and hops them to the closest tent. She bends down to retrieve the backpack that has been left outside.

KAT
Sean’s. Can smell it.

They awkwardly crouch down together onto the ground. Kat starts to riffle through his stuff, grimacing as she touches some underpants. Kat withdraws a t-shirt and goes to put it on but at the last moment throws it at Tara instead.

KAT
Here.
Tara accepts it, surprised.

CUT TO:

LATER: The girls are dressed in Sean’s clothes and the canvas shower curtain has been abandoned. Kat sniffs the collar of the top she’s wearing and pulls a face.

KAT
I don’t believe it. He packed his dirty laundry.

Kat’s hand goes into the backpack again but, instead of a new t-shirt, out comes -

A bundle of paper. It’s about a hundred copies of the photo of Tara and Christian kissing.

The girls stare down at it, stunned.

KAT
Told you it wasn’t me.

TARA
But why...?

Realisation dawns on Kat with a thud.

KAT
His idea of a romantic gesture.  
(off Tara’s look)  
It would seem Sean has a rather large crush on me.

Tara instantly forgets that she’s no longer friends with Kat and slips straight back into best friend mode.

TARA
Like a proper one? Do you think he’s fantasising about you? ‘Cause a Sean fantasy could mean...

KAT
(over)  
I know. Anything, right.

TARA
And imagine if he’s got the GPS-thing happening? There’ll be like no place to hide.

Kat is staring at Tara. That was the reaction she was missing.

TARA
What?
Kat shakes her head, almost smiling but sadly.

KAT
Nothing.

Kat wriggles modestly into a fresh t-shirt. Tara can sense something has changed between them and takes her moment.

TARA
Kat... When wasn’t I there?

Kat takes a moment to answer.

KAT
I know you don’t think my problems are real -

Tara goes to interject but Kat stops her.

KAT
Listen. But they’re mine. And I guess, I’ve been pretty... unhappy lately. Like about what I’m doing here and -

TARA
You should’ve told me.

KAT
I think I wanted you to ask.

Tara sees the simple truth in this.

KAT
Kind of feels like you put everything ahead of me. Ballet, guys, which is cool for you because you don’t need me. But the thing is... I need you.

This was extremely hard for Kat to admit and tears have pricked her eyes. Tara nods, realising that Kat needs her to ask what’s going on - understanding her friend for the first time. She squeezes her hand.

TARA
So how did Natasha take your party? Was there fall-out?

Kat laughs, pushing her tears back.

KAT
Major. She went ballistic.

Tara crosses her legs and gets settled.
And sitting there Kat finally opens up to Tara, and Tara finally works out how to listen to Kat, and we pull out leaving them to it.

EXT. MOUNTAINS/CAMPGROUNDS/CAMPFIRE - NIGHT 9

TARA, KAT, SAMMY, CHRISTIAN, ABIGAIL, SEAN, BONNIE, HAZEL, MS HISTEAD, N/S FIRST YEARS (GIRLS AND BOYS), TARA (V.O.)

Night has fallen as Tara and Kat arrive back at the campfire wearing Sean’s clothes. Students are huddled around the fire, eating dinner. A sense of calm has descended over everything.

Kat taps Sean on the shoulder. He spins around.

SEAN
(delighted)
You’re wearing my clothes. We’re practically in a relationship.

Kat reveals the pile of photocopies, she’s been holding behind her back.

KAT
I sense we might be getting a divorce.

Sean looks at her face, clocking that she’s mad.

SEAN
Really? Bad move?

CROSS TO:

Tara approaches Christian who is sitting by himself.

TARA
Hey. Do you have a minute?

Christian follows Tara away from the campfire. They pass Sean who is throwing the photocopies onto the flames, supervised by Kat.

Tara leads Christian a little bit away from the group.

TARA
I’ve been thinking a lot about what you said and... I like you too.

Christian is about to smile but Tara isn’t finished.
TARA
But only as a friend.

CHRISTIAN
A friend?

Tara nods. Christian studies Tara - she’s lying but it’s a convincing performance. He didn’t think it would turn out like this.

CHRISTIAN
I’ve put it out there a few times now.

TARA
I know.

CHRISTIAN
Not going to do that again.

TARA
Know that too.

CHRISTIAN
Okay.

Both of them are hurting but Tara forces herself to walk away. She sits down beside Kat and Petra at the campfire. They pass her a stick of marshmallows. Tara breathes, knowing that however difficult it is, she’s made the right choice.

TARA (V.O.)
I spend a lot of my life wishing it was more like a Choose Your Own Adventure book.

EXT/INT. MOUNTAINS/CAMPGROUNDS/TEACHERS’ TENT - DAY 10

TARA, KAT, MS HISTEAD, TARA (V.O.)

It’s just on dawn and Kat is tapping on Tara’s tent. She unzips it and looks out bleary-eyed.

TARA (V.O.)
And if I don’t like how something turns out...

TARA
I was finally asleep.

KAT
Come with me.

Tara looks back to the sleeping form of Ms Histed, snoring loudly. She grabs her boots and leaves the tent.
TARA (V.O.)
... I can just flip backwards and do it again.

EXT. MOUNTAINS/WATERFALL - DAY 10
TARA, KAT, TARA (V.O.)

The girls stand looking up at a waterfall. It has taken Tara’s breath away.

KAT
Made me think of you.

Tara starts stripping down to her undies.

KAT
What are you...? No, we’re just looking. We’ll freeze our bits off.

Tara just grins and runs towards the waterfall.

TARA (V.O.)
Of course, in real life that’s impossible.

EXT. MOUNTAINS/CAMPGROUNDS/CAMPFIRE - DAY 10
SAMMY, ABIGAIL, TARA (V.O.)

The fire is now only embers. Abigail is shivering as she anxiously watches Sammy read her new handwritten essay. He’s wearing his glasses.

TARA (V.O.)
You have to live with consequences.

ABIGAIL
It’s not perfect. I couldn’t put it through spell-check so -

SAMMY
Shhh.

Abigail goes back to watching him anxiously, playing with her mosquito bite. She’s been up all night.

SAMMY
Interesting.

Abigail’s had enough. This has become important.

ABIGAIL
Give it back.

She goes to snatch it from him but Sammy’s too quick for her. He removes his glasses and folds up the essay.
SAMMY
(poker faced)
Disgusting. Another thing you’re brilliant at.

The most beautiful smile spreads over Abigail’s face.

ABIGAIL
Truly? Because I’ve never done essays before. Mum usually did them for me and...

To Abigail’s surprise, Sammy is leaning in to kiss her. And to her absolute astonishment she kisses him back.

EXT. MOUNTAINS/WATERFALL – DAY 10

TARA, KAT, TARA (V.O.)

Tara and Kat are splashing around underneath the waterfall. They’re in the undies, not a care in the world, as they frolic in the icy cold water.

TARA (V.O.)
I never looked after another lamb.
But three weeks later I adopted a joey. The first of many. And have always remembered to shut the gate.

And we freeze on Tara’s grinning face as she splashes Kat. Friends again.