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Dance Academy

SERIES ONE

EPISODE 22

"Fight or Flight Response"

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RELEASE SCRIPT
13/11/09

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1 **INT. ACADEMY/REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY 1** 1
TARA, ETHAN

INTERCUT WITH:

2 **EXT. CITY STREETS/THE ROCKS - DAY 1** 2
CHRISTIAN, N/S PEDESTRIANS

STUDIO: Morning. Sweat drips off Tara as she focuses on her rehab. She's lying on her stomach and Ethan has a theraband across her ankle. Together they work on strengthening her hamgstring muscle.

TARA (V.O.)

So apparently there's this basic human reaction to fear. It's called the fight or flight response.

CUT TO:

STREETS: Morning. Christian's run has a new intensity. The lines of a iron fence railing blur behind him as he races through The Rocks. His face is grim - determined. His feet pound the pavement.

TARA (V.O.)

When something freaks us out, our first response is to run, very fast, in the opposite direction.

CUT TO:

STUDIO: Tara looks exhausted as she lays on her side with her front leg bent in front of her, lifting her underneath leg in a series of adductor exercises.

TARA

Don't you have a Company costume fitting to go to?

ETHAN

It can wait. Focus on your VMO.

CUT TO:

STREETS: In a scene reminiscent of episode 3 Christian jumps across from one city wall to another. As if he's being chased/escaping. His run has taken on a frantic - almost surreal element.

TARA (V.O.)

The second response is actually much harder.

CUT TO:

2

CONTINUED:

2

STUDIO: Tara is now doing a series of scissor-style stomach crunches, her neck and back off the floor. It looks strenuous, painful.

TARA (V.O.)

It's where you ignore every instinct.

ETHAN

I'm not hearing you breathing.

TARA

(as she comes up)
Argh!

TARA (V.O.)

And instead of running, you stay...

CUT TO:

STREETS: Christian has reached a high point. He looks out over the Sydney skyline and then closes his eyes, face stretched up to the heavens.

TARA (V.O.)

... and fight.

Christian jumps down onto the ground.

CUT TO:

STUDIO: Tara finishes her last scissor crunch and then collapses back onto the floor. Ethan leans back on his heels and smiles at her.

TARA

You're enjoying this.

All Tara can manage is an exhausted smile. But she looks happy with herself.

3

EXT. ACADEMY/WHARFSIDE - DAY 1

3

CHRISTIAN, LEGAL AID LAWYER, AARON (O.S.), N/S DANCERS

Christian approaches his LEGAL AID LAWYER, a fresh faced, male, recent graduate - over worked and underpaid. Christian is still in his sweaty, running clothes. The lawyer's obviously been waiting for him and doesn't look pleased at the fact that he's late.

LEGAL AID LAWYER

You're late.

CHRISTIAN

Who are you? Where's the other lawyer?

3

CONTINUED:

3

LEGAL AID LAWYER

Reassigned. It's okay, I've read
your file.

They start to walk briskly along the wharf. He hands him a
letter.

LEGAL AID LAWYER

Your hearing's been set for next
week in the District Court.

Christian tries to cover the look of fear in his eyes.

CHRISTIAN

Right.

LEGAL AID LAWYER

Do you have a personal reference
from the school?

CHRISTIAN

Not yet.

LEGAL AID LAWYER

It's important Christian.

CHRISTIAN

What do you give me? 60/40? 50/50?
That I'm going to juvie.

The lawyer looks alarmed - he has a busy case load and no
time for looking after this kid.

LEGAL AID LAWYER

Look, so long as the co-accused.
Your friend...

He flips through his files for his name. Christian is annoyed
by his lack of knowledge about his case.

CHRISTIAN

Aaron.

LEGAL AID LAWYER

So long as Aaron supports your
story about what happened that
night, you have a good chance of a
suspended sentence. That means no
juvie time.

CHRISTIAN

And if he doesn't show? Odds go
down right?

Off the lawyer's questioning look.

CHRISTIAN

Just asking.

3

CONTINUED:

3

LEGAL AID LAWYER

Just asking? Yeah we need Aaron to say he was the one who planned the robbery, he was the one who brought the knife.

The lawyer studies Christian.

LEGAL AID LAWYER

Is he planning on skipping his court date?

CHRISTIAN

No. He's solid.

He looks at his files - a busy day ahead.

LEGAL AID OFFICER

Good. Get that reference and we'll go from there.

He heads off to the street onto his next case. Christian is left on the wharf, things are looking bad for him.

He pulls out his phone and hits a number. We hear him being sent straight through to a message.

AARON (O.S.)

(on phone)

Yeah, it's Aaron. You know what to do.

CHRISTIAN

(on phone)

It's me... Again. Look, call me okay.

He hangs up, takes one look back at the Academy and heads off in the opposite direction.

4

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 1

4

KAT, ABIGAIL, TARA, SAMMY, PATRICK, N/S BOARD MEMBER, N/S FIRST YEAR BOYS AND GIRLS

Character class: Patrick leads the first years in an old-fashioned character class, demonstrating where necessary. The girls are wearing character skirts. Kat and Sammy are dancing together.

PATRICK

That's good Sammy. Chin up Kat. You're at Court, be regal.

Kat talks while she dances, keeping one eye on the BOARD MEMBER who is observing from the front of the studio, taking notes.

4

CONTINUED:

4

KAT

Sir I was thinking what we need are some white, crusty wigs. Very 18th Century. Very fetching.

Patrick smiles at her through gritted teeth, aware of the Board Member behind him.

PATRICK

I'll take that under advisement.

As the dance moves into a more allegro section, we cross to Tara who is sitting on the sidelines, working her feet with a theraband. She pays particular attention to their legs and feet as the series of jumps puts obvious stress on their healthy knees.

Patrick moves over to Tara to speak privately.

PATRICK

It feels like you got that cast off a while ago. Has Doctor Wicks said anything about coming back to class?

Tara shakes her head, nervous.

TARA

We want to be certain it's healed properly.

Patrick nods and moves away. Tara slumps, relieved he didn't ask too many questions.

Kat and Sammy arrive near Tara, waiting their next turn. Kat shoots an evil eye at the Board Member.

KAT

I can't believe they got rid of Hip Hop for this.

SAMMY

(teasing Kat)

This and mime class. Extra ballet history. Notation.

Abigail joins them.

ABIGAIL

I like the Board's new program.

KAT

Naturally.

Just then Christian arrives, very late and still wearing his hoodie. Patrick clocks him - isn't pleased.

4 CONTINUED:

4

PATRICK

Mr Reed? Where's your note?

CHRISTIAN

Note?

PATRICK

New rules. All unexplained absences must be explained to the Principal.

Christian just shrugs, turns and leaves the room. Tara watches him go, still hurting over their break-up.

5 **INT. ACADEMY/MR KENNEDY'S OFFICE - DAY 1**

5

MR KENNEDY, CHRISTIAN

Christian slumps in a chair across from a worried Mr Kennedy.

MR KENNEDY

What's going on Christian? I'm told this isn't the first class you've been late for, or missed entirely?

CHRISTIAN

I had to see my lawyer. He wants a personal reference.

MR KENNEDY

And what should it say, "Christian used to come to class but now can't be bothered"?

CHRISTIAN

You can say whatever you like.

Christian gets up to go, Mr Kennedy snaps. He's under pressure.

MR KENNEDY

Sit. The Board are serious about their new "Back to Ballet" policy. Our teaching methods are being scrutinised. Even having you here, under bail conditions, is something they've questioned.

CHRISTIAN

(stung)

I'm sorry to make things hard for you.

Mr Kennedy softens. He's on Christian's side.

MR KENNEDY

That's not what I meant. I just need you to work with me a little.
(MORE)

5

CONTINUED:

5

MR KENNEDY (CONT'D)

If you want a reference, how about
you show us you deserve it?

CHRISTIAN

Don't worry about it.

Christian gets up and leave the room.

6

INT. ACADEMY/CORRIDOR - DAY 1

6

TARA, KAT, ABIGAIL, SAMMY, N/S FIRST YEARS BOYS AND GIRLS

Class is finished. The first years pile out of the room,
carrying their practise skirts and shirts.

Kat, Sammy and Tara emerge together. Kat is fired up about
the changed curriculum and on her soapbox.

KAT

We can't just take all these
changes lying down. We have free
will. We need to plan.

TARA

(apologetic)

I would love to plan but I have
knee stuff.

Kat rolls her eyes as Tara heads off. She looks to Sammy,
putting him on the spot.

ABIGAIL

Sammy!

They turn to see Abigail emerging from the studio and making
a beeline for him. Kat makes a face.

KAT

Come find me when you're free.

Kat heads off in another direction, as Abigail reaches Sammy.
She smiles - he smiles back but less enthusiastically than
usual.

ABIGAIL

I was looking for you last night.

SAMMY

Yeah? I... was hanging out with
Kat.

ABIGAIL

(flirting)

Are you avoiding me?

She's not letting her vulnerability show but it's there under
the surface. He has been avoiding her.

6

CONTINUED:

6

SAMMY

No... I just, you know, you and Kat... you're like opposite magnetic poles, anyone caught in the middle is instantly crushed... Not pretty.

ABIGAIL

So if I could be friends with Kat that would help?

Sammy laughs - and then sees Abigail's face - she's being serious.

SAMMY

Sure. I mean, not that there's anything that needs help, right? Right... I should go. Kat... I promised.

And he takes off after Kat, leaving Abigail wondering what just happened.

7

INT. ACADEMY/DOCTOR'S SURGERY - DAY 1

7

TARA, DR WICKS

Tara sits on the examining table. Dr Wicks moves her leg slowly back and forth.

DR WICKS

The ultrasound shows all the ligaments are healing nicely. How does that feel?

TARA

Okay, I guess.

Dr Wicks finishes examining Tara and smiles, pleased for her.

DR WICKS

I think you're ready to start class. Barre work at first but you should be able to build up your strength quite quickly.

Tara is less convinced. She's nervous.

TARA

Really? My knee still feels very... fragile.

DOCTOR WICKS

I thought you weren't in any pain?

TARA

No. I'm just scared it'll pop out again.

7

CONTINUED:

7

DOCTOR WICKS

You've put the work in, Tara. Your muscles are strong, they'll protect it.

TARA

No guarantees though, is there?

The Doctor shakes her head. There never is.

DOCTOR WICKS

At some point you have to take a leap of faith. I wouldn't let you do it if you weren't ready.

As Dr Wicks makes a note on her files, Tara tries to smile, but we can see that a level of anxiety persists.

8

EXT. ACADEMY/WHARFSIDE - DAY 1

8

CHRISTIAN, TARA, ETHAN, N/S STUDENTS

Christian walks along the wharfside, once again on his mobile phone.

CHRISTIAN

(on the phone)

Aaron, call me back. The hearing's next week. I need to speak to you.

He hangs up, frustrated and a bit scared. Just then Tara comes around the corner, preoccupied with the news from the doctor and they almost bump right into one another.

TARA

Hey.

CHRISTIAN

Hey.

They're both awkward, there's still residue resentment towards each other from their recent break up.

TARA

What did Mr Kennedy say? Does he know you've been missing a lot of classes?

CHRISTIAN

Didn't think you'd noticed.

His gruffness is too much for Tara, she has enough of her own problems.

TARA

Don't worry about it.

8

CONTINUED:

8

She heads off, sad they can't even talk anymore. Christian hesitates for a moment and then can't stop himself.

CHRISTIAN

Tara? I just...

Tara turns and waits. This is obviously hard for him.

CHRISTIAN

Can we go somewhere? Talk?

TARA

Now? I'm supposed to be... (*meeting someone*).

Just then Ethan arrives and sees Christian and Tara talking, he stops, not sure what to do. Christian sees him and puts two and two together.

TARA

Ethan's helping me... with my rehab.

It's clear Christian doesn't believe this.

CHRISTIAN

Good for him.

The moment has passed, Christian heads off away from them.

TARA

Christian...

It hurts. Ethan steps in.

ETHAN

He's a big boy. You ready?

Tara takes one more look after Christian then follows Ethan. She sees a piece of paper sticking out of his back pocket and reaches for it.

Ethan turns around to find Tara holding up his contract in her hand.

TARA

What's this?

9

INT. ACADEMY/REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY 1

9

TARA, ETHAN

The sun sets through the studio windows. Ethan carries a Pilates ball over to the centre of the room. Tara is much more interested in reading Ethan's contract.

9

CONTINUED:

9

TARA

I still can't wrap my head around the fact that this piece of paper means you get paid to dance? With the National Ballet.

Tara beams wide. To her, it's a golden ticket.

TARA

It's insane. Why haven't you signed it yet?

Ethan looks uncomfortable, but covers it quickly.

ETHAN

I have a week to read the fine print so...

TARA

I would crawl over broken glass to sign my contract.

He busies himself with the ball - doesn't look her in the eye.

ETHAN

Yeah well... You should be glad I haven't signed. Once I'm in the Company there won't be time for me to be your personal rehab assistant.

Ethan points to the ball - Tara should start.

ETHAN

Say a hundred crunches?

Tara winces as she starts work. He's a hard taskmaster.

TARA

I could always fake your signature.

10

EXT. MAROUBRA BEACH - DAY 1
CHRISTIAN, KAYLAH, N/S HIP HOP KIDS

10

End of the day. Kaylah and a few other kids dance on a makeshift cardboard dance floor they've constructed near the beach.

The hip hop is very cool and street. There are some incredible breakers, performing spectacular moves. Kaylah is a standout - she's in her natural element.

Christian pulls up on his skateboard. He watches Kaylah dance for a beat, then she notices him, smiles and waves.

10

CONTINUED:

10

Kaylah breaks from the others and heads over to see Christian - gives him a kiss and a big hug.

KAYLAH
Hey stranger.

CHRISTIAN
You seen Aaron?

Kaylah tries to make light of his rudeness.

KAYLAH
Hey Kaylah - how's things?

CHRISTIAN
Have you seen him?

Kaylah picks up on Christian's tone, knows there's something wrong.

KAYLAH
He's gone up north. Why?

This is bad news for Christian.

CHRISTIAN
Our court case is next week.

KAYLAH
I'll kill him.

Kaylah's anger is obvious. They watch the dancing for a moment, both thinking about Aaron.

CHRISTIAN
You guys been... hanging out again?

Kaylah shrugs. She's been seeing Aaron on and off for a very long time.

KAYLAH
You know me - moth to flame.
Listen, he just said he had to go
sort out some stuff..

It's a flicker of hope.

CHRISTIAN
So then he might still get here
before next week?

Kaylah doesn't believe that for a second.

KAYLAH
Yeah. Yeah, it's possible.

Kaylah gives Christian a friendly bump and they both watch the hip hop dancing happening in front of them.

13

CONTINUED:

13

Christian leaps to his feet and stands on the edge of the cliff looking out to the ocean. He has a new energy, like a cloud has lifted from him.

CHRISTIAN

He's not coming back is he?

KAYLAH

He might.

CHRISTIAN

I can't think about it anymore, I don't care.

He shouts out across the cliff.

CHRISTIAN

I - don't - care!!!

He turns to Kaylah - a new energy filling him.

CHRISTIAN

You ever thought about how many days we've lost, not doing the things we wanted to?

KAYLAH

Millions - at least.

Just then Christian phone rings. He pulls it out of his pocket, looks briefly at the caller and hangs up.

CHRISTIAN

Coming?

He holds out his hand - his smile is irresistible. Kaylah holds out her hand and he pulls her to her feet.

CUT TO:

SAMMY'S ROOM: Sammy looks across at Christian's empty unslept in bed as he leaves a message.

SAMMY

(worried)

...so yeah - just want to know you're okay. Give us a call. Or text. Whatever.

He hangs up - this is not good.

14

INT. ACADEMY/REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY 2

14

ETHAN, TARA

Once again Ethan and Tara work in the rehearsal studio before class. Tara is finally at the barre - but she's not working her knee as much as she could.

14

CONTINUED:

14

She's doing easy exercises, like slow tendus, avoiding anything difficult like full plies.

Ethan watches her carefully. His patience at stretching point.

ETHAN

Try some fondus. You can't dance forever with a straight knee.

Tara looks nervous but moves into a fondu sequence. She flinches as she bends her working leg (her injured leg).

TARA

My whole leg's shaking.

ETHAN

You need to build up strength.

Tara stops.

TARA

It doesn't feel right. I'll do it another day.

Ethan keeps pushing it.

ETHAN

Today.

TARA

I have to make sure I recover properly.

ETHAN

You're stopping because you're scared.

Tara gets defensive, mad - the mood turns ugly. She's at breaking point.

TARA

Of course I am. Do you know how close I came to never being able to dance again?

Ethan gives as good as he gets.

ETHAN

That's why I'm pushing you.

TARA

No. It's like you're on some power trip. And it's easy for you. You have a contract with the Company. You know exactly where your life is going.

14

CONTINUED:

14

An uncomfortable look crosses Ethan's face but Tara is so caught up in her own problems she doesn't notice.

TARA

Don't you have rehearsals or something? Why are you even here?

ETHAN

I thought I was helping you.

TARA

We're not getting back together if that's what this is about.

Ethan laughs, completely over it.

ETHAN

Trust me. That's the last thing on my mind.

He grabs his stuff and leaves her alone in the studio. Tara slumps to the floor - what is wrong with her?

15

INT. ACADEMY/CORRIDOR - DAY 2

15

SAMMY, KAT, TARA, ABIGAIL, PATRICK, BONNIE, HAZEL, N/S STUDENTS

Sammy heads down the corridor towards class. Kat walks backwards in front of him so she can talk and keep up with him at the same time.

KAT

My theory is that they can take it off the curriculum, but they can't stop us learning.

Kat becomes increasingly impassioned, on a mission.

KAT

It's like Defence of the Hip Hop Arts. You're Hermione.

SAMMY

Why am I Hermione, why can't I be Harry? At least Ron.

KAT

You can be whoever you want to be so long as you come, co-teach, my illegal hip hop class.

SAMMY

(distracted)

Sure.

Kat turns around and heads away, in a rush of organisational energy.

15

CONTINUED:

15

KAT

You're like blood to me Lieberman,
blood.

But Sammy's got other things on his mind. Patrick crosses just before he reaches the studio door and stops him.

PATRICK

Christian's coming today, isn't he?

SAMMY

I guess, I mean... I don't know.

PATRICK

He's going to fail if he doesn't show up to class. You have any idea what's going on?

Sammy watches as Tara enters the class, a dark cloud following her after her fight with Ethan.

SAMMY

Maybe.

PATRICK

You're his mate. Look out for him okay?

Patrick heads into the classroom leaving Sammy standing outside. Abigail approaches the door to the studio, smiles at Sammy.

ABIGAIL

I thought we could do something special this afternoon. Maybe a picnic?

Sammy looks up at her, completely flustered and stressed.

SAMMY

I don't know, things are crazy right now. I've got to find Christian... and then I said I'd help Kat with her dark arts hip hop thing.

Abigail has tried to be nice - but she can't keep it in any longer.

ABIGAIL

So Kat just snaps her fingers and you come running?

SAMMY

(snaps)

They need me. And you wonder why my friends have issues with you.

15 CONTINUED: 15

And then he heads back out the corridor. Abigail is left in the corridor.

16 EXT. MAROUBRA BEACH/SKATE RAMP - DAY 2 16
CHRISTIAN, KAYLAH, N/S SKATERS

INTERCUT WITH:

17 EXT. ACADEMY/WHARFSIDE - DAY 2 17
SAMMY, N/S STUDENTS

SKATE RAMP: Christian, in a matte black, full helmet covered in old stickers, skates for all he's worth. It's like this is the last chance he's ever going to get to skate like this - and that's exactly what he's thinking. But there's a huge grin across his face, he is truly in the moment.

Kaylah watches him from the side of the park, a little worried at his intensity. A mobile phone starts ringing from inside Christian's jacket at her feet. Kaylah rifles in his pockets - pulls out the phone. After a moment's hesitation, she answers.

KAYLAH
Hello?

CUT TO:

WHARFSIDE: Sammy paces outside the Academy.

SAMMY
Who's that?

KAYLAH (O.S.)
(on phone)
Who's that?

SAMMY
Sammy. Is Christian there?

Silence.

SAMMY
Listen, whoever you are, I need to speak to him - it's urgent - he's in trouble.

CUT TO:

SKATE PARK: Kaylah looks over to where Christian is skating.

SAMMY (O.S.)
(on phone)
If you have his phone you're either a friend or a thief...
(MORE)

17 CONTINUED: 17

SAMMY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
if you're a friend, you'll tell me
where I can find him.

Hold on Kaylah.

18 **EXT. MAROUBRA BEACH/SKATE RAMP - DAY 2** 18
CHRISTIAN, KAYLAH, SAMMY, N/S SKATERS

Sammy stands out like a fish out of water from the regular ramp crowd. Kaylah spots him a mile off - and waves him.

KAYLAH

Sammy?

Sammy comes over and he and Kaylah watch Christian skate.

He's really going for it, skating like there's no tomorrow - and loving every minute.

KAYLAH

You said he's in trouble.

SAMMY

He's been missing class, they're pretty worked up about it at the Academy.

KAYLAH

That's it?

SAMMY

They'll kick him out, I love Tara to bits but she's not worth that.

Kaylah stares at Sammy, stunned.

KAYLAH

Tara. You think this is all about a girl?

SAMMY

It was a pretty intense break up.

Kaylah starts laughing.

SAMMY

What?

KAYLAH

You so don't get it.

19 **INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 2** 19
TARA, ABIGAIL, KAT, N/S FIRST YEARS (BOYS AND GIRLS)

INTERCUT WITH:

20 **EXT. MAROUBRA BEACH - DAY 2** 20
CHRISTIAN, SAMMY, KAYLAH, N/S SKATERS

INTERCUT WITH:

21 **EXT. THEATRE/STAGE DOOR - DAY 2** 21
ETHAN

STUDIO: Mixed Classical. Tara sits once again on the sidelines and watches as Patrick takes the first year class.

We stay on Tara as they dance an allegro sequence in the centre. There's a lyrical quality to the dancing but the emphasis is on strength, particularly in the legs, feet and knees. She watches as Abigail soars powerfully into the air.

CUT TO:

SKATE PARK: Christian sees Sammy standing with Kaylah and gives him a happy wave. Sammy waves back and then watches as Christian tears it up on the half pipe, not holding anything back - enjoying himself.

CUT TO:

THEATRE: Ethan arrives at the Stage Door. His contract is still in his back pocket. He pulls it out, looks at it for the longest time and then shoves it back into his pocket, opens the door and goes inside.

CUT TO:

SKATE PARK: Christian comes over and gives Sammy a welcome hug. He's exhilarated, no longer caring what's going to happen.

CHRISTIAN

Am I gonna get a lecture?

Sammy is thrown. He's never seen Christian so upbeat.

SAMMY

(lying)

What? No... But you could've said what was going on.

Christian turns to Kaylah.

CHRISTIAN

You told him?

21

CONTINUED:

21

Kaylah shrugs. Christian looks at them both with a stern face - and then breaks out into a grin.

CHRISTIAN

Whatever, right? It's done now.
You want a go?

Sammy looks at the steep descent of the half-pipe.

SAMMY

Think I'll pass.

CHRISTIAN

Your loss.

And he takes off again, grinning as he reaches speed.

22

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 2

22

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

After class. Students stream out of the studio after their Contemporary class. Kat stands at the door, handing out fliers and talking to them as they leave.

KAT

Hip hop starts in half an hour.
Bring your friends.

Tara walks past her - Kat grabs her arm.

KAT

You're staying right?

TARA

Can't. My knee.

A flash of impatience crosses Kat's face but she lets it go.

KAT

Have you seen Sammy?

TARA

I'm sure he'll be here. Sorry Kat -
next time. Promise.

She leaves. Kat watches as the last of the students heads out of the studio.

KAT

Good, great, go get something to
drink and I'll meet you all back
here.

She turns - disappointed - and looks back into the studio. There is one student left - Abigail.

She looks up at Kat - a fake smile plastered across her face.

22

CONTINUED:

22

ABIGAIL

I can wait with you.

Kat is suspicious - and a bit embarrassed.

KAT

Why?

ABIGAIL

I want to support you. You're Sammy's friend.

KAT

He's not here so you can drop the act.

ABIGAIL

He asked me to come - here I am.

KAT

You really think he cares?

ABIGAIL

You're important to him.

Abigail walks over to the barre - unable to resist a barb.

ABIGAIL

Although apparently not enough to come himself.

23

INT. THEATRE/STAGE - DAY 2

23

ETHAN, TARA, STAGE RIGGER (O.S), N/S STAGEHANDS

Tara arrives side-stage at the Company dance theatre. The rehearsal is over and only a few stagehands and riggers working on a rope fly remain.

The sound of a beautiful piece of music being played on the piano draws Tara onto the stage. As she gets closer she sees that the piano player is Ethan - he's totally caught up in the music.

She walks up behind him and he suddenly notices that she's there and stops playing.

TARA

I didn't even know you could play.

ETHAN

I'm just messing around.

TARA

You're really good.

Ethan's face lights up.

23

CONTINUED:

23

ETHAN

There's this amazing collective in New York. The composer's on stage the whole time and the choreography and the score are workshopped together. I don't know, I was thinking of maybe sending them some ideas.

He's clearly inspired and Tara smiles.

TARA

You should do it.

ETHAN

Yeah. But... the National probably wouldn't like it. Me being under contract.

As his energy subsides, Tara realises she has to say her piece.

TARA

Look, Ethan, I came to apologise about this morning...

ETHAN

Forget it.

TARA

I so appreciate how you've been helping me and - you're right. I've got to stop being scared. I just don't know how.

Ethan stands and looks at her, wanting to help.

ETHAN

When did you decide you wanted to dance?

Tara shrugs as she looks around the theatre.

TARA

Probably... watching Natasha on an old video.

ETHAN

That was the first time?

Tara thinks back a bit further. Her voice softens and becomes more personal.

TARA

No. The first time was when I was five. I jumped off the roof and decided that dancing must be...

23

CONTINUED:

23

ETHAN

The closest thing to flying?

He gets her - she smiles back at him.

TARA

Something like that.

Just then one of the riggers drops a rope to the stage.

RIGGER (O.S.)

Look out!

Ethan looks up - an idea forming in his head.

24

EXT. MAROUBRA BEACH/ PARK - DAY 2

24

SAMMY, CHRISTIAN, KAYLAH, N/S BEACH GOERS

Christian, Sammy and Kaylah sit at a beach-side park table. In front of them on the table are four still-wrapped burgers, a big soft drink and a box of fries as well as eaten burger wrappings. Kaylah and Sammy sit watching Christian eat another large burger, egg and beetroot dripping onto the paper in front of him.

He pushes a burger in front of each of them.

CHRISTIAN

So was I right? Best burger in Sydney?

SAMMY

Seriously one was enough.

Christian shrugs - takes it back.

CHRISTIAN

Next weekend I'll be eating gruel and wearing prison overalls.

KAYLAH

Will you stop it?

SAMMY

Exactly. They don't send you to prison for shoplifting.

CHRISTIAN

We had a knife, it's a whole new ball game.

On Sammy as this registers, but it doesn't stop him for a more than a moment.

SAMMY

My mum's a barrister, I can talk to her, get some advice.

24

CONTINUED:

24

CHRISTIAN

I'm sick of advice, I've done everything they asked me and for what? I've got one week left of freedom and I'm going to enjoy myself.

Kaylah stands up - annoyed.

KAYLAH

You're an idiot.

Christian continues to eat - he doesn't want to hear this.

CHRISTIAN

I'm sorry you feel that way.

KAYLAH

You make one stupid mistake and then a whole bunch of really good things happen for you and you're just going to throw them away because Aaron let you down. Again.

CHRISTIAN

Out of my hands.

Kaylah walks away, disgusted and annoyed. Sammy looks after her, wondering whether to go after her.

CHRISTIAN

She's always like that. Go on, have another one, we haven't even started on today's list of things to do.

Sammy sits for a moment, then grabs a burger and starts to unwrap it - Christian couldn't look happier.

25

INT. ACADEMY/REHEARSAL STUDIO- DAY 2

25

KAT, ABIGAIL, N/S DANCERS

Hip hop music blares in the small studio. A small but committed group have finally arrived for Kat's hip hop session. The dancers all take turns in doing a solo out the front of the group.

It's an informal but fun routine, interspersed with moment of free form as the various soloists take the floor.

Kat still leads the group - directs her comments to Abigail - who is bored, doing the moves but not with any energy or passion - mostly she keeps her eye on the door waiting for Sammy

KAT

Commit to it...

25

CONTINUED:

25

Abigail is furious that Kat is singling her out, she stumbles on a step.

KAT

You can't fake it, if it's not real
it shows.

Abigail exchanges a furious look with Kat, who just grins.

The soloists swap as another dancer takes the main floor. Kat whoops encouragement. Abigail just keeps her eye on the door.

KAT

Come on, this isn't even that hard,
loosen up. Abigail, is that all
you've got?

Abigail's finally had enough, she steps forward and indicates that it's time for her solo.

And what she does amazes everybody, including Kat. Maybe it's her technical ability, maybe it's hanging out with Sammy - but Abigail does the most amazing hip hop solo.

Even Kat is impressed. As the track comes to an end Abigail finishes with a spectacular move. The rest of the class applaud. Abigail looks straight at Kat.

ABIGAIL

You're so right, it's really not
that hard.

On Kat, she has to admit Abigail was good.

26

INT. THEATRE/PLATFORM ABOVE THE STAGE - DAY 2

26

ETHAN, TARA, N/S STAGE RIGGER, N/S STAGEHAND

We find Tara high above the stage at the theatre. A RIGGER stands below holding a rope. Tara is wearing a harness and is being held in place by STAGEHAND.

Ethan is on the stage - he waves up to Tara and points to the rigger.

ETHAN

Just let him take your weight.

TARA

You sure about this?

ETHAN

No fear right? You want to fly.

TARA

My whole life.

26

CONTINUED:

26

Tara nods to him and Ethan waves to the rigger - who moves slowly across the floor with the rope.

Tara feels the pulls of her harness and then she's flying across the stage. Her weight counter-balanced by the rigger.

The rig is a simple fly, and as Tara slowly and gracefully flies out across the stage we see that her face is filled with joy. This is her dream come true.

Ethan runs to the console - switches on some lights. The stage backdrop floods with a soft orange/pink light and a mirror ball sends sparkles of light across the whole scene (*adjust*).

Ethan's direction make the stage instantly more magical. He starts to direct the rigger.

ETHAN

Come downstage and then move her
across stage left (*adjust*).

The rigger follows his directions and Ethan watches as Tara flies through the magical space that he has created.

27

EXT. MAROUBRA BEACH/ROCK PLATFORM - DAY 2

27

SAMMY, CHRISTIAN,

Christian and Sammy stand on the edge of a high set of rocks. Sammy looks at the drop to the swirling ocean below.

SAMMY

I take it we're not just here for
the view.

CHRISTIAN

We jump.

Sammy stares down at the rocks.

CHRISTIAN

Aaron and I used to do it all the
time. Trust me it looks worse than
it is.

SAMMY

Why are we doing this again?

CHRISTIAN

Cos life is short Sammy.

Christian grins at him and jumps off the rocks!

Sammy hesitates, then builds all his courage together and with a great yell and a leap - jumps off after Christian!

28

EXT. MAROUBRA BEACH SHORE - DAY 2

28

SAMMY, CHRISTIAN, SURFERS, BEACH WALKERS

Sammy and Christian wash up to the shore, perfectly safe. Sammy is laughing his head off, they both flop onto the sand just past the shoreline.

SAMMY

That was awesome.

CHRISTIAN

I told you.

SAMMY

I will admit. You were right.

Christian nods to himself - he knows - but Sammy is serious.

SAMMY

But you're wrong about your court hearing. Kaylah said it, you're running away.

CHRISTIAN

(angry)

What else am I supposed to do?

SAMMY

Gee I don't know, get legal advice and keep going to class so that you get a reference from the Academy?

Christian is quiet - finally he speaks.

CHRISTIAN

But I did it, I was at that servo. We totally did that guy over.

SAMMY

You going to do it again?

Christian just looks at him - hurt and angry he would even suggest that.

SAMMY

Exactly. So why are you sitting around here? They need to know that.

Christian looks at his friend.

CHRISTIAN

You're like a forty year old man trapped in a geeky sixteen year old body aren't you?

SAMMY

Yes I think I am.

28 CONTINUED: 28

Christian smiles and pushes Sammy into the sand.

29 INT. ACADEMY/REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY 2 29

KAT, ABIGAIL, N/S STUDENTS

The rest of the hip hop class head out of the room with their dance bags. Abigail and Kat are the last ones left.

KAT

I was surprisingly impressed today.

ABIGAIL

Sammy taught me a few things, it's not hard if you apply yourself.

Kat laughs - despite everything - she admire Abigail's unflinching honesty. Abigail hesitates.

ABIGAIL

Can I ask you something?

Kat shrugs.

ABIGAIL

If a guy tells you he's not ready to... go to next level, is that normal?

Kat could say a million things right now, but decides to be honest as well.

KAT

In regards to guys I'm mostly lost in the woods.

ABIGAIL

Pretend you've left a trail of breadcrumbs.

Kat sees the seriousness in Abigail's face. There's a hint of their long ago friendship.

KAT

Did you want to?

ABIGAIL

I don't know. But now everything's weird and...

KAT

Maybe you should talk to him about it. If things feel wrong there are generally reasons...

Abigail takes this in.

29

CONTINUED:

29

ABIGAIL

I don't think I'll be back next week.

KAT

The dark arts will have to live without you.

Abigail gives Kat the smallest of smiles before she heads out the door.

30

INT. BOARDING HOUSE/SAMMY'S ROOM/CORRIDOR - DAY 2
SAMMY, CHRISTIAN, ABIGAIL

30

Late afternoon. Sammy and Christian laugh together as they head into their room.

SAMMY

Egg is essential, beetroot is the devil's food.

CHRISTIAN

It's not even a burger without beetroot.

They open the door to find Abigail sitting on Sammy's bed - a picnic basket by her side. Christian quickly backs out and leaves them to it.

CHRISTIAN

I should... (leave). Hi Abigail.

Abigail doesn't bother replying. Sammy comes into the room and leans against the dresser - caught out.

SAMMY

You made a basket.

ABIGAIL

We had a date.

SAMMY

I... forgot.

ABIGAIL

I figured that.

SAMMY

I am so sorry. Christian's got some really messed up stuff going on, and I can't tell you what it is but...

He trails off.

30

CONTINUED:

30

ABIGAIL

Tell me one thing. At any point this afternoon did you remember that you were supposed to be with me?

On Sammy - the answer is clearly no.

ABIGAIL

It's not working Sammy and I don't know how to fix it.

Sammy looks like he's about to disagree, and then stops.

SAMMY

I know. Me either.

ABIGAIL

Maybe we shouldn't be doing this anymore?

SAMMY

(softly)

Maybe we shouldn't.

Abigail is stunned. It was an ultimatum, but this was not the answer she was expecting.

SAMMY

I mean, if that's what you want.

Abigail stares at him. It's clearly what he wants.

ABIGAIL

Yeah. It's what I want.

She stands.

ABIGAIL

You can keep the picnic.

Abigail leaves before Sammy can see how upset she really is.

31

EXT. SYDNEY - DAY 3

31

NIL CAST

A new day shines out over The Rocks. It's a quiet morning, just birds and early morning joggers on the paths around the harbour.

32

EXT. ACADEMY/WHARFSIDE - DAY 3

32

ETHAN, TARA, N/S STUDENTS

Tara has her bag over her shoulder as she walks to class. She sees Ethan standing on the edge of the wharf scribbling madly onto a piece of paper.

32

CONTINUED:

32

TARA

Hey you.

Ethan doesn't answer. As Tara gets closer she sees he's using his Company contract as writing paper - there are notes and choreography drawing all over it. He is excited.

ETHAN

I had an idea, from your flying yesterday. How cool would it be to do a whole piece around the ropes? Have like ten of them on stage at once.

TARA

So you drew it on your Company contract?

Ethan looks as if he's just realised that it actually is.

ETHAN

I didn't want to forget. And I've been carrying this around all week.

TARA

I know.

ETHAN

(confused)

So why haven't I signed? It's what I've always wanted.

TARA

Things change.

Ethan nods as it starts to become clear to him.

ETHAN

I want to create my own work. I can't do that if I'm standing around in the corp de ballet for the next five years.

Tara looks at him and the contract covered in scribbles that he holds in his hand.

TARA

Let me take a look at that.

Ethan opens the contract and starts to talk her through his ideas.

ETHAN

Well we start with a pianist on stage and there's the girl...

We pull away from as Ethan describes his idea to Tara, letting his own fear slip away as well.

32 CONTINUED: 32

TARA (V.O.)
*I once had a monster that lived in
my wardrobe.*

33 **INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 3** 33

TARA, KAT, ABIGAIL, SAMMY, CHRISTIAN, PATRICK, N/S FIRST YEARS

Mixed Classical Ballet: The first years are mid-class, once again the students perform an allegro sequence.

TARA (V.O.)
*Every night, I would lie awake
terrified. So sure that if I moved,
it would find me.*

Christian dances across the room, watched closely by Patrick.

PATRICK
Put everything into it Christian.
Better.

TARA (V.O.)
*And then one day my dad took the
door off the wardrobe so that I'd
know there was nothing there.*

Sammy and Abigail meet one another as they dance. Abigail is the first to look away.

TARA (V.O.)
*He said the only thing I had to
fear was fear itself.*

We reveal Tara at the barre. She's working turned out, bending deep into a fondu and rotating her knee in a series of rond de jamba enlair.

TARA (V.O.)
And he was right.

She's not dancing - but she's made a start.

END OF EPISODE