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# Dance Academy

SERIES ONE

EPISODE 26

"Learning to Fly Pt 2"

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**2ND AMENDMENTS - PINK**

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1     **EXT. SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE - DAY 10**     1

TARA (V.O.)

We're soaring amongst the clouds over Sydney.

TARA (V.O.)

*At home, we have a billion stars.  
So many I've always believed in  
magic.*

Now descending, we draw closer and closer to the famous Opera House. No matter how many times you see it, it always manages to take your breath away.

2     **INT. THEATRE/AUDIENCE - DAY 10 (LATER)**     2

TARA, SEBASTIAN

By contrast the auditorium is mostly in darkness. Sebastian sits behind the director's desk, his desk lamp glowing eerily.

SEBASTIAN

It's no secret the Clara rehearsals have been hit and miss. I'm really hoping that changes now we're in the theatre.

He looks straight at Tara who is standing in front of the desk, young and nervous in her practice clothes.

3     **INT. THEATRE/BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR - DAY 10**     3

TARA, KAT, SAMMY, N/S STUDENTS, TARA (V.O.)

SLOW MOTION... as Tara, Kat and Sammy are walking, feet turned out, through the rabbit warren of backstage. Sammy and Kat are talking excitedly over the top of each other. Tara is taking it all in, equal measures of excitement mixed with terror.

TARA (V.O.)

*Not wizards and sorcerers. My magic  
is the kind of four-leaf-clovers.  
And star-signs.*

The corridor is chaotic as dancers hunt for their dressing rooms, while those who are already dressed make their way to the stage.

Sammy peels off in a different direction. We stay with Kat and Tara as they continue through.

TARA (V.O.)

*True love.*

They arrive at a closed door. It's ordinary except for the star on it.

KAT

Come on T. This is you...

Grinning, Kat pushes the door open.

TARA (V.O.)

*And that in another life I could  
fly.*

4 **INT. THEATRE/TARA'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY 10** 4  
TARA, KAT, ABIGAIL

The room glows with what seems like a thousand twinkling lights, all dancing around the mirrors. Tara looks around, eyes wide, clearly overwhelmed, like she's just landed in Oz.

TARA

This is not all for me?

KAT

Yeah. Well you and...

Abigail enters the dressing room. She plonks her bag down in front of the mirrors.

ABIGAIL

I'm taking the good mirror.

5 **INT. THEATRE/AUDIENCE - DAY 10** 5  
TARA, ABIGAIL, ETHAN, SEBASTIAN, TARA (V.O.)

Back to Sebastian's desk. We widen to reveal Abigail standing beside Tara, also in practice clothes, also nervous.

TARA (V.O.)

*It used to be so easy to believe in  
magic.*

SEBASTIAN

... not going to sugarcoat it,  
Tara. The understudy run throughs  
have been more consistent.

This is a compliment to Abigail, whose eyes are gleaming.

SEBASTIAN

I'm not going to make a decision  
until after the dress rehearsal,  
but you should both be prepared I  
may end up switching your roles.

Ethan sits beside Sebastian. He shoots Tara a reassuring smile, providing some comfort that he's in her corner.

TARA (V.O.)

*These days I'm just struggling to  
believe in myself.*

Tara takes a deep breath and heads towards the stage, ready to begin.

6 **INT. THEATRE/BOYS' DRESSING ROOM - DAY 10** 6  
SAMMY, CHRISTIAN, N/S STUDENTS (BOYS), N/S OLDER BOYS

Down in what is definitely cattle class, Sammy enters the male corps de ballet dressing room.

He drops his bag down on the bench beside Christian. His phone is ringing but he doesn't move to answer it, as he starts unpacking his bag. Off Christian's look.

SAMMY  
Someone told my dad exam results  
come out tomorrow. He wants to  
discuss my Five Year Plan.

As Sammy listens to his dad's voicemail message, a couple of OLDER BOYS enter the dressing room. Christian glances from them to Sammy and lowers his voice.

CHRISTIAN  
I was thinking this could be a  
chance to get to know some guys in  
different years.

Sammy is distracted as he turns off his phone.

SAMMY  
Uh-huh. Why?

Christian shrugs, awkward.

CHRISTIAN  
I don't know. You could work out if  
you're... or not...

Christian's run out of words. He inclines his head to one of the boys who is peeling off his shirt, revealing 6-pack abs.

CHRISTIAN  
(helpfully)  
He's fit.

Sammy cannot believe Christian is trying to have this discussion. He turns his attention to pulling off his shoes.

SAMMY

Mate.

CHRISTIAN

Too soon then?

Understatement.

SAMMY

Just a little bit.

But Sammy smiles to himself, appreciating that Christian is making an effort not to let there be weirdness between them.

7 INT. THEATRE/STAGE/SIDESTAGE - DAY 10 7  
TARA, ABIGAIL, N/S SNOWFLAKES, N/S STUDENTS

INTERCUT WITH:

8 INT. THEATRE/AUDIENCE - DAY 10 8  
ETHAN, SEBASTIAN

Rehearsal is underway. Intercut where appropriate between the STAGE and the AUDIENCE.

Still wearing practice clothes, Tara is dancing her Act 2 solo alone in the centre of the stage. The lights are in her eyes and while she can't see Sebastian, she can definitely hear his corrections over the PA. They cut like barbs.

SEBASTIAN

(on mic)

It's a big theatre Tara. I need you to tell the story with your whole body.

Tara tries to inject some more feeling into her performance.

SEBASTIAN

(on mic)

I don't mean smile more. This is not an Eisteddfod.

Tara immediately stops smiling.

SEBASTIAN

(on mic)

Better. When are you getting the costume for this?

TARA

(calls out)

This afternoon.

Tara steps out into arabesque but she's lost concentration and wobbles.

SEBASTIAN

(on mic)

Come on. Sustain it.

Tara runs across the stage to begin the menage.

SEBASTIAN

(on mic)

I don't understand why Act 1 goes so well but as soon as you get to this solo...

She takes a deep breath but falls out of the second turn. The music continues and Tara tries to pick it up but stumbles out of the next few turns as well. In fact, she's lucky not to end up on the floor.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)

(on mic)

All right. We'll have to pick that up later. Moving ahead to Snowflakes.

Tara is left standing still, crestfallen, as the music cuts out. She looks like a lost little girl as other dancers cross stage and the Snowflakes prepare to dance.

Sebastian pushes away the microphone, frustrated. Ethan glances up from his lap-top where he's typing notes.

ETHAN

It takes her a while to process but when she gets it...

SEBASTIAN

If you were directing would that still be your call?

The Snowflakes have begun and are dancing in perfect unison. Abigail is performing with assured grace.

SEBASTIAN

Abigail is the safer option. Technically proficient, a bit cold but...

Sebastian pulls his microphone back to his mouth as Tara runs onto stage and bumps into one of the snowflakes.

SEBASTIAN

(on mic)

Clara is meant to be weaving through the snowflakes. Not crashing into them.

8

8

ETHAN

Tara may be a risk but when she gets it there will be magic. Trust me.

As Tara continues to stumble her way through, Ethan's confidence slips slightly. He's really hoping he's right.

8A

**EXT. SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE - SUNSET 10**  
N/S STUDENTS

8A

Tired from a hard day's work, dancers are leaving the Opera House, heading home for the night.

9

**INT. THEATRE/SIDE-STAGE CORRIDOR - NIGHT 10**  
KAT, SEBASTIAN, N/S STUDENTS

9

Rehearsal is over and Kat is hanging clothes onto the costume racks, cradling her phone to her shoulder as she talks to Myles. Her expression makes it clear she's not telling the truth.

KAT

(into phone)

Yeah, no the parentals are fine. But then ever since I got too old for day care they haven't known what to do with me over the holidays.

Kat feels a tap on her shoulder and turns around.

KAT

Dad.

Kat is so shocked to see Sebastian standing behind her that she immediately hits end on the phone. How much of that did he just hear?

SEBASTIAN

Was that Myles? I'm going to have to meet this young man.

Kat quickly regains her composure by turning the conversation onto Sebastian.

KAT

I'm sorry. Are we talking?

Sebastian looks blank. Kat jogs his memory.

KAT

Me walking out of the audition, you instant coronary...

(conspiratorial)

If there's been a ceasefire, no one's showed me the white flag.

Sebastian smiles. He always appreciates his daughter's spirit.

SEBASTIAN

Sweetheart, we're always talking.  
I've just been giving you space to  
do your own thing. It's what you  
wanted, right?

Kat stares at her father, for once rendered speechless. No lecture would be a first but this is almost an apology.

SEBASTIAN

Here. Let me help you with that.

Weirded out, Kat watches as her father helps her hang the costumes onto the rack. Her father is finally giving the time of day... and it couldn't have come at a worse time.



10

**INT. THEATRE/BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR/TARA'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY 110**  
TARA, KAT, ABIGAIL, MISS RAINE

Tara walks down the corridor, exhausted and dejected from the latest bad rehearsal.

She enters her dressing room. Kat has wheeled one of the costume racks inside and Abigail is in the process of trying on Clara's Act 2 nightgown - it's crisp white with a pink sash. Kat is pinning the hem and looks up.

KAT

Hey. Wardrobe needs you to find the nightgown that fits best and go down and see them.

Tara nods and walks over to the costume rack where three other nightgowns are hanging.

ABIGAIL

I took the newest. Dust doesn't work with my allergies...

Tara runs her fingers along them and chooses the least assuming - faded white cotton with a pale blue sash. Tara slips it over her head while Abigail continues in the background.

ABIGAIL

(background)

Imagine if your parents drive all this way and you're not dancing anything.

Kat sticks her with a pin.

ABIGAIL

(background)

Ouch. I'm just saying, they'd have to make you a Party Guest. Or a Flower.

When Tara looks up again, she sees that Kat is studying her, completely ignoring Abigail. She gets up and tugs at the dress.

KAT

It's weirdly perfect. I don't think it needs to be altered at all.

Tara looks side on in the mirror. It's true, it's like it's been made for her.

10

CONTINUED:

10

MISS RAINÉ (O.S.)

Girls, I have a few notes. Just  
because you're on-stage Tara  
there's no reason to forget...

Miss Rainé has appeared at the door. She stops as she spots  
Tara in the nightgown.

TARA

To forget what Miss Rainé?

Miss Rainé comes out of her reverie.

MISS RAINÉ

Sorry. I haven't seen that costume  
in a long time.

Kat takes the card that's tied to the costume where a list of  
illustrious names are written.

KAT

(reading)

It is ancient. My mum wore it. And  
Olga Boranski. Dame Josie Doran.

Abigail glances from Tara's costume to her own, regretting  
her choice.

MISS RAINÉ

Yes. It came over with the Ballet  
Russes - 1936. Superstition says  
it's never had so much as a broken  
thread.

Tara turns back to the mirror, gazing at the nightgown. It  
does feel special.

MISS RAINÉ

Take good care of it.

11

**MOVED. NOW 8A**

11

12

**INT. THEATRE/STAGE - NIGHT 10**

12

TARA, CHRISTIAN, YOUNG NATASHA, OLGA, JOSIE, SEBASTIAN (O.S.)

The theatre is dark, lit only by the emergency lights, as  
Tara walks out onto stage wearing the nightgown.

She stands looking out over the auditorium, a sea of empty  
seats stretch before her.

In an instant, she can hear Sebastian's voice in her head. It  
echoes out, distorted.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)

Come on. Sustain it.

Tara marks out one of sequences she messed up that afternoon. When she reaches the arabesque, she does it flat out. This time Tara is able to hold the arabesque for a full two seconds, like she could stand there forever if she wanted to.

Tara steps out of it and shakes her head surprised - where did that come from? Sebastian's voice interrupts again.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)

It's a big theatre Tara. You need to fill it with your whole body.

Tara closes her eyes and summons the music. Once it's playing in her head, she starts the solo from the beginning. It's already much better than this afternoon's attempt, but as she rounds the corner she sees...

A dancer appearing out of nowhere. The girl has black hair and is wearing exactly the same Clara nightgown - it's YOUNG NATASHA. She's dancing beautifully.

Tara stops, stunned, but the girl just continues dancing.

After the slightest hesitation, Tara joins her. She picks the solo up at the same point as Young Natasha and they move in unison for a moment.

Tara comes out of a turn and this time barely flinches as she sees two other girls - OLGA and JOSEPHINE - also wearing the nightgown and dancing the Act 2 Clara solo.

In the shadows of the darkened theatre, the four Claras from across time dance together. They're moving in beautiful lyrical harmony until...

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)

Hey.

Tara is pulled back to reality with a thud. She turns to see Christian emerging from the wings.

CHRISTIAN

You going home at all tonight?

When Tara turns back, the other dancers have disappeared.

TARA

I had to try the solo wearing the costume. See if it made a difference.

CHRISTIAN

(smiles)

It did.

12

CONTINUED:

12

They start leaving the stage together.

TARA

How long were you there? You didn't see anything... strange?

CHRISTIAN

Strange how?

Tara shakes her head - forget it. With one last look back at the empty stage, Tara leaves the theatre with Christian.

13

**EXT. HARBOURSIDE JOGGING TRACK - NIGHT 10**

13

TARA, CHRISTIAN

Tara and Christian are walking home together along the Harbour. The city lights twinkle from across the water.

TARA

I can't believe this year is almost over.

CHRISTIAN

Yeah. I'm hoping Sammy's dad gets off his back or holidays at the Liebermans will be a little tense...

Tara's face lights up as she get an idea.

TARA

If he doesn't, you should so come to the farm.

Off Christian's expression.

TARA

I'm serious. They always need extra help, and Christmas Day we have like fifty people to lunch so you wouldn't be in the way.

CHRISTIAN

How do you have fifty people?

Christmas for Christian was always just himself and his mum. Tara smiles, she loves talking about her home.

TARA

Cousins. Second Cousins. We all go swimming in the dam and camp out under the stars.

(beat, softly)

I think you'd really love it.

Christian nods, he's sure he would. They've stopped walking. A kiss hovers in the air. It takes a lot for Christian to break the moment.

CHRISTIAN  
Yeah. But then other stuff would probably happen...

TARA  
Is that... I don't know, is that a bad thing?

Tara is out on a limb, open and vulnerable. She's never gotten over Christian.

CHRISTIAN  
You and I don't have the best track record.

The rejection stings. Christian notices.

CHRISTIAN  
Sorry, I just don't think...

Tara forces a smile, embarrassed about putting herself out.

TARA  
No. You're right. Bad idea. Forget I said anything.

Christian flicks her a look as they keep walking back to the Boarding House, now in silence.

14 **EXT. SYDNEY - DAY 11**

14

It's another sunny day in Sydney. We're now flying high, downwards towards the Academy.

15 **INT. ACADEMY/CORRIDOR/NOOK - DAY 11**

15

TARA, KAT, CHRISTIAN, ABIGAIL, SEAN, N/S FIRST YEARS (GIRLS AND BOYS), AUDITIONING GIRL, N/S AUDITIONING GIRL

The First Years are crowded around their pigeonholes, anxiously ripping open their exam results. Exhilarated, Sean is tearing up his Anatomy textbook.

SEAN  
Take that Anatomy and stuff it in your protastic fascia.

KAT  
You know you do it in Second Year as well?

As Sean stops destroying his book, Kat looks around taking the whole scene in. Unlike everyone else, she's just holding her letter, in no hurry to open it.

She watches as Christian approaches Tara.

CHRISTIAN  
Scholarship?

He's trying not to be awkward about their conversation the night before but Tara is still uncomfortable.

TARA  
Part. Shared with...

She inclines her head to Abigail who walks past at that moment, disappearing down the corridor.

ABIGAIL  
(into phone)  
Mum I got it. And I topped  
everything... Yes, Hip Hop. I said  
everything.

Kat approaches, stuffing the letter in her pocket.

KAT  
Check out Audition Week.

Tara turns and watches two girls, with numbers on their leotards, negotiate their way through the corridor. Both are wide-eyed and hopelessly naive.

TARA  
Did we look that young?

As the girls stop beside Tara, Kat turns to Christian.

KAT  
(quietly)  
Can I get your help with something  
later?

AUDITIONING GIRL  
Excuse me. Hi. Can you tell me  
where the dressing room is?

The girl passes Tara her map. Tara doesn't skip a beat.

TARA  
Back the way you came. Second door  
to your left.

Kat fights to keep a smile off her face as the newbies are directed straight to the boys' toilets.

AUDITIONING GIRL  
Is it amazing? Being at the  
Academy?

TARA  
(smiles)  
You have no idea.

16 INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 11 16  
SAMMY, MISS RAINE

Sammy stands opposite Miss Raine, picking at his fingernails and wracked by nerves, as she reads out his results. She's holding Sammy's letter.

MISS RAINE  
Distinction. High Distinction.  
Distinction. You're in the top  
percentile of every subject.

Sammy can't stand it any longer.

SAMMY  
I know I place well academically  
but what about my dance exams?

MISS RAINE  
They are your dance exams, Sammy.  
You should be proud how far you've  
come this year.

Sammy can't believe it. Pride and joy fills him with relief.

MISS RAINE  
Which is why I was so disappointed  
to get this email from your father.

SAMMY  
Sorry?

Sammy's smile fades into confusion as Miss Raine passes him over a print out of the email. She's uncharacteristically sympathetic.

MISS RAINE  
It says he's withdrawing his  
financial support. If I'd known  
earlier... but all the scholarships  
are given out now.

Sammy stares down at the letter - if his dad is refusing to pay the fees he won't be able to stay at the Academy.

17 **INT. THEATRE/SIDESTAGE LEFT/STAGE - DAY 11** 17  
TARA, KAT, ABIGAIL, SAMMY, CHRISTIAN, N/S STUDENTS, STAGE  
MANAGER (O.S.)

INTERCUT WITH:

18 **INT. THEATRE/AUDIENCE - DAY 11** 18  
ETHAN, SEBASTIAN

SIDESTAGE: The dress rehearsal is well underway and it's a flurry of activity backstage.

STAGE MANAGER (O.S.)  
(into mic)  
Full dress rehearsal. Act 2  
Beginner's to the stage. Act 2  
Beginners.

Christian is in his full Mouse King costume, minus the mask. Sammy, dressed as a Soldier, is pacing with his ear to the phone as he tries to call his parents.

CHRISTIAN  
He's never wanted you to be at the Academy. Why is next year any different?

SAMMY  
Because I'm going into Grade 11.  
(as his father)  
"The subjects you do, the school you go to. It affects your university entrance Samuel."

The phone finally picks up at the other end.

SAMMY  
(into phone)  
Mum put me onto... Okay, tell Dad I've got my phone on now and he can call me if he wants but he cannot make up his mind until he sees me dance tomorrow night.

CUT TO:

AUDIENCE: Ethan and Sebastian are behind the director's desk.

SEBASTIAN  
(into mic)  
Tara did you manage that costume change? You only have a few minutes.

Tara steps out onto stage, wearing her nightgown. She gives them the thumbs up.

CUT TO:



SIDESTAGE: Tara steps back off stage where Kat is waiting. Tara is babbling, nervous, as Kat straightens her costume.

TARA

So do you and Myles have exciting plans for the holidays?

An uncomfortable look crosses Kat's face.

KAT

Why are we talking about this now?

TARA

I'm trying to distract myself.

Abigail swans past, wearing her Snowflake costume.

ABIGAIL

Break a leg Tara.

The music begins. Tara turns to Kat, eyes wide with fear, whimpering under her breath.

KAT

It's time to breathe. And focus.

CUT TO:

AUDIENCE: Sebastian makes a note on the lighting cues.

SEBASTIAN

If after this rehearsal I decide to re-cast, I want you to be the one who tells Tara.

Ethan turns to his dad - he's not serious.

SEBASTIAN

Keeping a professional distance is another important part of the job.

Ethan turns his eyes back to the stage as Tara runs out wearing the nightgown.

INT. THEATRE/TARA'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 11  
TARA, ETHAN, ABIGAIL

Abigail enters the dressing room in a black cloud of defeat. She glances at Ethan and Tara - he is twirling her around in the air. Both are ecstatic.

TARA

I'm keeping it?! Really?

ETHAN

Never doubted it for a second.

TARA

It's this nightgown. It's like  
magic. When I'm wearing it, nothing  
bad can happen.

Abigail clocks this but Ethan is focused on his own news as he takes in her glowing face.

ETHAN

Listen, I've decided to stick around Sydney for a bit. Dad's offered me a job as his assistant. There's stuff I can learn.

TARA

Sounds smart.

Tara smiles, pleased for him. But there's something he wants to ask and it makes him nervous.

ETHAN

You should come stay with us over the break. We'll take class. You and Kat can hang out. You and I can hang out...

Tara looks down and realises he's still holding her hand. A charge of romantic chemistry passes between them.

ETHAN

Think about it, okay?

Tara studies the boy who first changed the way her heart beats. She makes a spur of the moment decision.

TARA

I don't have to. I'm in.

ETHAN

Really?

Ethan's face breaks into the most gorgeous smile. Tara nods, trying to convince herself that this is what she wants, as her thoughts dart back to Christian.

Abigail has been unpinning her headpiece but now can't stand it any longer.

ABIGAIL

Will I be able to change anytime this century or..?

Ethan knows to make an exit.

ETHAN

All right. We'll talk details later.

He kisses Tara on the cheek and leaves the dressing room. Tara is still processing how she feels about Ethan as she looks over to Abigail who is removing her Snowflake costume, devastated about not winning the role. Tara starts to change out of her nightgown. Abigail stops what she's doing for a moment and takes a breath.

ABIGAIL

I have a favour to ask. Tickets are sold out and some idiot put my parents together.

Tara is surprised. Abigail has never, ever asked her for something, she's practically choking on the words.

ABIGAIL

I don't know if you've heard but they won't go if they're sitting next to each other. I was wondering whether one of yours might swap with mine?

Tara is thrown for a second. It's a bit of an odd request.

TARA

Oh. Um...

It's a sensitive subject and Abigail instantly clams back up.

ABIGAIL

Forget it.

TARA

No I can ask them.

ABIGAIL

It's fine. I'll sort something out.

Abigail stalks out of the dressing room. Tara sighs and carefully hangs her special nightgown on the rack. It makes her feel better just looking at it.

**EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - NIGHT 11**  
KAT (O.S.)

It's dark outside the Boarding House.

KAT (O.S.)

It's not much. Just a couple of presents.

**INT. BOARDING HOUSE/KAT'S ROOM - NIGHT 11**  
KAT, CHRISTIAN

Christian is standing in Kat's room. It's a bombshell of half-finished packing, boxes everywhere. She's on her stomach, with her head under the bed, as she searches for something.

KAT (O.S.)

But it'd be ace if you could... Ow...

Kat hits her head on the bed as she pulls three parcels out of the dust.

KAT

... play Santa for me at a good moment?

CHRISTIAN

Why? You planning on not being around?

Kat pauses for a moment, pulling a cobweb out of her hair, and then comes clean to the one person who she knows won't try to stop her.

KAT

No, actually. Myles and I are flying to Darwin. We're doing a roadtrip around the country.

Kat smiles, nervous but excited. It's good to talk about it.

CHRISTIAN

I hadn't heard.

KAT

It's not for the public record yet. I'm calling Ethan from the airport. He can let everyone know that I'm...

CHRISTIAN

Running away?

KAT

Going away.

Kat takes in Christian's expression.

KAT

Disapproval. You were the one person I thought would understand.

Christian shakes his head, he doesn't. Kat gestures to the presents.

KAT

There's one in there for you.

As Christian goes, she looks around at her half-dismantled bower nest. She pulls a photograph off the wall.

Night over the black, rippling Sydney Harbour... And then the world awakes in a burst of golden light.

23

**EXT. HARBOUR BATHS - DAY 12**

23

TARA, KAT, SAMMY

It's just on dawn as Tara, Kat and Sammy clamber down towards the water. They're carrying their towels.

SAMMY

Okay I'm lost in the Bermuda Love Triangle. Are you getting back together with Ethan or...?

TARA

I don't know. Maybe.

Tara turns back to Kat as she takes the first step into the water.

TARA

Kat, would it totally ruin your holiday if I... (*went out with your brother?*)

KAT

(snaps)  
All right. Stop.

Sammy pulls his foot out of the water.

SAMMY

What? Did you see a shark?

KAT

No, it's the end of the year. You're my two best friends. Can we just be here for a second? Together.

Kat stares out at the glistening water, reflecting on what's been and trying to capture the serenity to take it with her.

Sammy and Tara try to be quiet for a moment. They share a look and drag her screaming into the water.

24

**EXT. WAVERLEY CEMETERY - DAY 12**

24

CHRISTIAN

Across town, Christian sits on the grass beside his mother's grave. He's brought a small bunch of flowers and the letter with his exam results.

CHRISTIAN

(reads)  
Contemporary: Distinction. Pas de deux: High Distinction. General Comment: "Christian lives up to his potential".

He folds the letter and carefully rests it on his mother's headstone.

CHRISTIAN

I wanted to say thanks Mum for making me audition.

He pushes back the tears that have formed.

CHRISTIAN

Anyway, so there's um... So there's this girl...

**INT. THEATRE/CORRIDOR/TARA'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY 12**

ABIGAIL, PRODUCTION RUNNER

The poster advertising the production of The Nutcracker has gone up in the corridor. The picture is of Tara, wearing the Act 2 nightgown and holding the doll. She's smiling, radiant.

Abigail stares at it for a moment and then continues down the empty corridor into her dressing room.

A young PRODUCTION RUNNER, is inside. He seems confused as he looks around.

ABIGAIL

Can I help you?

PRODUCTION RUNNER

I don't know, I'm doing work experience. I have to take costumes?

He shows Abigail his instruction sheet. She scans it, irritated and then points out the two costume racks.

ABIGAIL

That rack's for side-stage changes. These are fine to go into storage.

The Runner nods, grateful. He starts to wheel the two racks out of the dressing room.

PRODUCTION RUNNER

And that one?

He's looking at Tara's special nightgown, hanging on a hook behind the door. For a moment, Abigail goes completely still.

ABIGAIL

Storage.

The Runner puts it on the storage rack and then wheels them out, negotiating the small space.

PRODUCTION RUNNER

Thanks.

25 CONTINUED: 25

Abigail turns back to the mirror, inspecting her reflection as she tries to block out what she just did. She starts pinning her hair into a bun.

26 **EXT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT 12** 26  
NIL CAST

Night falls over the Opera House...

27 **INT. THEATRE/BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR - NIGHT 12** 27  
KAT, ETHAN, TARA, SAMMY, CHRISTIAN, SEBASTIAN, N/S STUDENTS

In a TIME LAPSE we see the empty corridor fill with dancers and stage crew, all moving purposefully in different directions, as the performance time draws closer.

Reveal Kat walking slowly through, taking everything in.

She sees Ethan and Sebastian approaching from the other direction. Sebastian is wearing a suit and giving last minute directions to Ethan who is dressed in black crew clothes and a headset.



SEBASTIAN

Kit-Kat you're sitting with me out front?

Kat shakes her head, feeling guilty about lying.

KAT

(guilty)

I'm going to stay here with the costumes.

They continue towards the stage. Christian is warming up in the corridor. He notices the expression on Kat's face and immediately understands what's happening.

CHRISTIAN

You're seriously leaving now?

Kat keeps walking, her mind made up. Christian chases after her.

CHRISTIAN

Wait, Kat. Come on, I've finally worked out what you and I have in common.

Kat can't help herself. She has to stop and listen.

CHRISTIAN

These people are it for us. They're our family. So quit dancing, blow off your parents, but at least say goodbye.

KAT

They'd try to stop me.

At that moment, Kat's phone rings.

KAT

(into phone)

Hey Myles... Yeah. No, I'm on my way.

Christian watches sadly as she disappears down the corridor.

**INT. THEATRE/TARA'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 12**  
TARA, MISS RAINE, ABIGAIL, STAGE MANAGER (O.S.)

Tara's eyes are closed as Miss Raine expertly applies her eye make-up with cool, reassuring hands.

MISS RAINE

Open.

Tara opens her eyes just as Abigail enters wearing her Snowflake costume.

TARA

I fixed up the tickets. Your mum's sitting with mine.

Abigail looks at her roommate in surprise. She wasn't expecting this.

MISS RAINÉ

Close.

Tara obeys and Miss Rainé puts the final touches on her eyes.

TARA

Miss Rainé, when you danced Clara what costume did you wear?

MISS RAINÉ

I never danced Clara.

Abigail watches them, feeling the tiniest twinge of guilt.

29 **INT. THEATRE/SIDESTAGE RIGHT/STAGE - NIGHT 12** 29  
SAMMY, SEAN, N/S STUDENTS, N/S BACKSTAGE CREW

INTERCUT WITH:

30 **INT. THEATRE/AUDIENCE - NIGHT 12** 30  
JACKIE LIEBERMAN, ARI LIEBERMAN, N/S AUDIENCE MEMBERS

**SIDESTAGE:** The overture is playing and the curtain is being raised. Sammy waits in his Act One "Boy At A Party" costume in the front wing. He's biting his fingernails until they bleed as he surveys the audience, being careful to keep out of view. He smiles, with relief, as he sees...

CUT TO:

**AUDIENCE:** His mother arriving late with Ari in tow. They edge past a couple of people and make their way to their seats. But as his mother settles in, she puts her bag on the chair next to her - the one booked for Dr Lieberman.

CUT TO:

**SIDESTAGE:** Sammy's face drains of all colour. His dad is obviously not coming. Sean peers over his shoulder, as the opening scene of The Nutcracker begins on-stage. He's unexpectedly sympathetic.

SEAN

Your dad a no show?

Sammy shakes his head, crushed.

SEAN

Mine hasn't spoken to me since he found out I had a boyfriend.

30

CONTINUED:

30

Sammy turns around and takes in Sean, as if seeing him for the first time. He actually looks handsome in his Fritz costume.

SAMMY

Really? How did I miss that?

\*  
\*

Sean grins, ignoring the question.

\*

SEAN

Let's do this.

With the hint of something more to come, Sammy follows him out onto stage.

31

OMITTED

31

32

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

32

KAT, MYLES

It's unnaturally quiet back at the boarding house as Kat and Myles re-enter her room. It's been cleared out and now looks barren and impersonal.

MYLES

That it?

Kat nods. Myles grabs her two suitcases and heads out.

She takes one last look back. Her gaze lands on the still unopened letter that's sitting on her dresser. At the last minute Kat grabs the letter containing her exam results, flicking off the light as she leaves everything that is familiar behind.

33 **INT. THEATRE/SIDESTAGE RIGHT/STAGE - NIGHT 12** 33  
ABIGAIL, ETHAN, SAMMY, TARA, CHRISTIAN, SEBASTIAN, N/S  
STUDENTS

Sebastian and Ethan are standing near the Stage Manager's box, watching the dancing on-stage. Ethan is listening to his headset as he brings Sebastian up to date.

ETHAN

Ben's got the profile spot on  
Drosselmeyer. And...  
(listens to headset)  
Yup. The mechs have fixed the tree  
issue and are standing by.

Sebastian smiles at his son, impressed with how quickly he has picked this up.

SEBASTIAN

Okay. I'm going out to take a look.  
You run it from here.

Ethan nods, pleased with the responsibility but totally focused on the task at hand. Sebastian is about to leave as Abigail approaches wearing her Snowflake costume.

ABIGAIL

Sorry Sebastian? I was just hanging  
my Clara costume side-stage -  
obviously nothing's going to happen  
to Tara but it's good to prepared.

Ethan peels his eyes away from the stage and starts listening properly.

ABIGAIL

Anyway, I noticed her nightgown  
doesn't seem to be there. I'm sure  
it's fine but I thought it was best  
to say something...

ETHAN

(warning)  
Abigail.

She ignores him, fixing her most innocent gaze on Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN

Thank you. Ethan can you check this out?

Ethan knows how important this costume is to Tara.

ETHAN

Um. Sure. Yeah.

Sebastian exits the wings and Ethan rushes off, leaving Abigail by herself. She waits for the feeling of triumph to swell. It doesn't come as expected.

CUT TO:

It's later and the curtain cascades down at the end of Act One. Tara runs into the wings, applause in her ears. She's smiling wide, exhilarated.

TARA

Okay that was fun.

Ethan, Sammy and Christian are all standing, waiting for her. None of them are smiling.

HARD CUT TO:

**INT. THEATRE/TARA'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 12**

TARA, SAMMY, CHRISTIAN, ETHAN, ABIGAIL, KAT (O.S.), SEBASTIAN (O.S.), STAGE MANAGER (O.S.)

INTERCUT WITH:

**EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT 12**

KAT, MYLES, N/S CABBIE, TARA (O.S.)

DRESSING ROOM: It's chaos in Tara's dressing room as people rush by in all directions, talking loudly.

It takes us a moment to find Tara - in contrast to the commotion around her she is sitting very still - her face is pinched white and she seems numb.

STAGE MANAGER (O.S.)

(over PA)

Act 2 Beginner's to the stage. Act 2 Beginner's.

Ethan looks like he wants to kill Abigail.

ETHAN

What did you do with it?

SAMMY

Back off. It's just been misplaced.

Sammy looks at Abigail, confident of her innocence. She flinches a little - surprised he's in her corner, even more so that it affects her.

Christian rushes into the dressing room, clutching two nightgowns.

CHRISTIAN

Wardrobe gave me these.

Tara's face shows a glimmer of hope but it's gone the second he holds up the two costumes. Ethan shakes his head.

ETHAN

Tara's had the blue sash.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)

(over radio)

I'm back Ethan. Is there still a problem with the Clara costume?

ETHAN

(into headset, lying)

No. Under control.

Ethan turns to Tara, taking charge.

ETHAN

You're going to have to wear one of those. Or Abigail's.

TARA

(very quietly)

I can't.

ETHAN

It's just a costume.

TARA

No it's not. It'll be like in rehearsal. I have never made it through this Act without the costume.

Tara takes a breath, making up her mind.

TARA

Abigail will have to go on.

Abigail's face cracks a little more. Her resolve is slipping.

ETHAN

We can't have a different Clara halfway through.

Ethan is so frustrated, he's about to lose it. Christian takes another tact, he crouches down beside Tara and speaks gently.

CHRISTIAN

Tell me what you need?

Tara looks up at him, face pale.

TARA

Kat. I want to talk to Kat.

Ethan glances at them, jealous despite the pressure of the moment.

ETHAN

Where is she?

(into headset)

Can someone find my sister?

We hold on Christian as pulls out his phone.

CUT TO:

ROADSIDE: Kat is standing on the side of the road, next to the Harbour. A TAXI is parked beside her and the Opera House can be seen in the distance, they haven't made it very far.

KAT

(into phone)

Whoah. Slow down.

TARA (O.S.)

It's gone. And I can't dance without it.

CUT TO:

DRESSING ROOM:

TARA

(into phone)

I'll make a fool of myself.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)

(over radio)

Ethan? Where's Tara? I thought you were handling this.

Ethan looks around, assessing the situation. He has to make the call.

ETHAN

All right. Abigail - start getting dressed.

He gestures to her understudy costume. Abigail holds it, but doesn't make a move.

CUT TO:

ROADSIDE: Myles climbs out of the taxi and watches as Kat tries to talk Tara down.

KAT  
(into phone)  
Okay. For one, you're an expert at making a fool of yourself. No one does it better. And two...

TARA (O.S.)  
Where are you?

Kat feels a horrible pang of guilt, but she brushes it aside for a moment and focuses on Tara. We've never seen Kat quite so mature.

KAT  
(into phone)  
It doesn't matter. What does is that you stop making excuses. I get that you're scared, but you need to suck it up...

CUT TO:

DRESSING ROOM: Everyone hears Kat's voice through the phone. Abigail still hasn't made a move to get dressed.

KAT (O.S.)  
... and do what it is you've been working for this whole year.

ABIGAIL  
Kat's right. And you're going to have to because I'm not.

Everyone turns to Abigail, stunned. No one more so than Tara.

ABIGAIL  
You're better at this than me. With or without a costume. And the audience will see it.

Tara and Abigail lock eyes. As Tara stares at her long-time competitor, we see her changing her mind.

CUT TO:

ROADSIDE: Kat hangs up the phone, shaken. Myles is right there beside her.

MYLES  
They do know you're going, right?

Kat averts her face. Myles takes her hands and makes her look at him.



MYLES

Listen. Hey. I don't care if we miss this plane, we miss the next one, or if we don't go at all. What I care about is you.

36 **INT. THEATRE/SIDESTAGE LEFT - NIGHT 12** 36  
TARA, ABIGAIL, SAMMY, CHRISTIAN, ETHAN, MISS RAINE, N/S  
STUDENTS

INTERCUT WITH:

37 **INT. THEATRE/STAGE - NIGHT 12** 37  
TARA, TARA (V.O.)

INTERCUT WITH:

38 **EXT. SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE/STEPS - NIGHT 12** 38  
KAT, MYLES

SIDESTAGE: In SLOW MOTION, we're with the gang as they enter the wings. Ethan, Christian, Sammy, Abigail and finally Tara wearing Abigail's Clara nightgown. It's crisp white, with a pink sash.

As Ethan rushes up to the Stage Manager's Box, Miss Raine walks towards them.

MISS RAINE

(whispered)

Why are they holding the curtain?

ABIGAIL

Wardrobe issue.

Miss Raine looks over to Tara as the music begins.

TARA

But I think I'm ready now.

MISS RAINE

I know you are.

Trembling, Tara turns away from everyone and walks towards the stage. She's summoning every scrap of courage, faith and strength she possesses. Christian comes up beside her.

CHRISTIAN

So, Christmas Day, is your family seafood people or turkey?

TARA

(distracted)

What?

CHRISTIAN

I'd love to come to the farm if the offer's still open. Who cares about track records.

Tara glances from Christian to Ethan, for a moment almost forgetting what she's about to do.

TARA

You have the worst timing.

CHRISTIAN

(grinning)

Shhh training bra. You're about to miss your cue.

He's right. The curtain is rising.

CUT TO:

STAGE: The world is deafeningly silent as Tara steps out. Time expands, stretching forever, as she looks around, the floodlights in her eyes. Tara closes them and instantly sees...

CUT TO:

*FLASHBACK MONTAGE: The moment she dislocated her knee. (From Episode 20)... The moment when Miss Raine caught her dancing in forbidden pointe shoes. (From Episode 2)... The moment when Miss Raine told her she wasn't ready. (From Episode One). All jumbled together...*

CUT TO:

Tara opens her eyes, trying to rid herself of these thoughts.

She looks straight into the wings where Miss Raine is watching. The teacher nods, almost imperceptibly, and Tara looks back to the stage.

The music and sound is back in full force as Tara begins to dance her solo. From the second she starts, we know she's going to be all right.

CUT TO:

SIDESTAGE: Sammy and Abigail stand side-by-side, looking out at the stage where Tara is dancing magnificently.

SAMMY

If I have to get six jobs, I'm staying at the Academy.

ABIGAIL

Shhh. I'm watching the dancing.

CUT TO:

OPERA HOUSE STEPS: Kat and Myles are walking up the steps towards the Opera House. She pulls the letter out of her pocket and passes it to him.

KAT

Will you read this for me?

Myles opens the letter and scans it quickly. By the expression on his face, we already know the answer.

MYLES

(gently)  
You didn't get into Second Year  
but...

KAT

(over)  
Okay.

Kat's expression is unreadable, as holding hands they keep climbing the stairs.

CUT TO:

STAGE: Tara is still dancing, the solo is reaching it's high point. It's as though she's defying gravity and is utterly in her element. Exceeding it. Unstoppable.

TARA (V.O.)

*So I'm in this place, I've only ever glimpsed before. Where gravity can't touch me. Nothing can.*

Tara looks back into the wings.

CUT TO:

SIDESTAGE: Ethan and Christian are watching side-by-side. The love triangle lives on.

TARA (V.O.)

*If I think about it, I can feel the ache in my knee but rather than stopping me it's spurring me on. A reminder.*

Kat and Myles arrive in the wings. Kat locks eyes with her best friend.

TARA (V.O.)

*One of the hundreds of turning points over the last twelve months that have brought me here. To this moment.*

CUT TO:

STAGE: Tara smiles at her people and turns back. In glorious slow motion we see her throw herself upwards in the air into her final grand jete.

TARA (V.O.)

*And finally I'm flying.*

CUT TO BLACK

END OF EPISODE.

END OF SERIES ONE.