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Dance Academy

SERIES ONE

EPISODE 8
BLOCK 2

"Growing Pains"

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1 INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO/CORRIDOR - NIGHT 1 1
ETHAN, TARA

INTERCUT WITH:

2 INT. ACADEMY/CORRIDOR - NIGHT 1 2
TARA

STUDIO: It's late. Ethan is workshopping a choreography piece, marking out moves, a lone figure reflected in the mirror.

CORRIDOR: Tara is also practicing some moves but of a different nature. She's talking to herself, not getting very far.

TARA

Hey... Hello Ethan... Hi...

Tara walks down the empty corridor. The city is captured in the window. Moonlight reflects off the water and sparkles against the walls. Tara is a lonely figure in the darkened school.

She steadies herself as she arrives at the door and watches Ethan for a moment. He's standing with his eyes closed, concentrating hard as he thinks through a sequence.

TARA

Hey.

Ethan's eyes snap open, his concentration is broken.

TARA

Saw the light. You're working late.

Her voice sounds strange. Her delivery stilted. Ethan's vaguely annoyed at the interruption.

ETHAN

Trying some ideas.

Tara nods and tries to look casual as she walks out. Then, as rehearsed, she turns back like she's *just remembered* something.

TARA

Oh. So I saw that there's this contemporary group from Alice Springs performing -- Wednesday night.

Ethan is suddenly awkward.

TARA

Thought it might give you some inspiration.

Ethan finally looks at her. There's no way to do this without hurting her feelings.

ETHAN

Don't know if that's such a good idea. You and me, going out.

TARA

I wasn't... It wouldn't have to be a date or anything.

It's obvious that it's exactly what it would be.

ETHAN

Look, it's not that I don't think you're a great kid. But you're Kat's best friend. You're like my other little sister.

He smiles, thinking he's letting her down easily. But Tara is gutted. *Great kid? Little sister?* This is a disaster.

3 **EXT. NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DANCE - DAY 2** 3

NIL CAST, TARA (V.O)

A brand new day. Mist hangs over the harbour.

TARA (V.O.)

When I was three I took a vow of silence until my parents let me start ballet.

4 **INT. BOARDING HOUSE/GIRLS' BATHROOM - DAY 2** 4

TARA, N/S STUDENTS (GIRLS)

A box of tampons is passed between toilet cubicles.

TARA (V.O.)

I was the youngest kid ever to attend the Patchewollock ballet school.

The bathroom's packed with girls. Eyebrows are being plucked, legs and underarms waxed, make up applied. Tara waits for the mirror, still reeling from Ethan's rejection.

TARA (V.O.)

The youngest winner in the regional Eisteddfod.

The mirrors in the girls' bathroom are fogged up from the showers. Tara wipes the glass clean with her towel and then groans as she sees her reflection.

TARA (V.O.)

I used to like being the youngest.

To add insult to injury, she now has an angry red pimple in the middle of her chin.

5 **INT. BOARDING HOUSE/BOYS' BATHROOM - DAY 2** 5

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

Three older boys are shaving, the bottom half of their faces entirely covered in shaving foam.

TARA (V.O.)

But these days it just feels like another liability.

Sammy stares at the few hairs on his top lip. He smothers them with shaving foam, pulls out his razor then -- *Slice.*

Sammy yelps. A thin line of blood appears in the foam. Sean pushes Sammy aside to get to the taps.

TARA (V.O.)

Especially in this place where we all know each other's weaknesses.

SEAN

Should've just asked if you needed a microscope.

Sean has several balloons that he fills with water - water bombs. One of the older boys looks on disdainfully.

SAMMY

(to Sean)

Grow up Callahan.

Sean just grins and bumps Sammy again as he grabs the balloons and heads out the bathroom.

TARA (V.O.)

We keep tabs on everything - who has the best arms, the best feet, the best technique.

6 **INT. BOARDING HOUSE/TARA'S ROOM - DAY 2** 6

ABIGAIL, TARA (V.O)

Abigail stands in her sports bra with her leotard half on. Over the top of the sports bra is a flesh coloured 'boob tube'. She stares at her image in the mirror, tries to flatten her developing chest by pulling the boob tube at the back.

TARA (V.O.)

Which means our bodies are on display 24/7,

She does not look happy about the changes to her body.

7

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

7

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

Sammy has a piece of tissue stuck to the shaving cut on his top lip as he walks towards his room.

TARA (V.O.)

*...there's no such thing as
privacy,*

He throws open the door and disappears inside.

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)

Hey!

Sammy is back outside the door, the colour of beetroot.

SAMMY

Sorry, Christian. I didn't...Sorry!

Sammy slams the door shut and heads off.

8

INT. ACADEMY/CORRIDOR - DAY 2

8

TARA, KAT, ETHAN, ETHAN'S MATE, N/S STUDENTS, TARA (V.O)

TARA (V.O.)

*And no small flaw ever goes
unnoticed.*

Close on Tara's pimple. Pull back to see Tara and Kat dump their bags outside studio. Tara stands with her hand covering the pimple on chin in the "thinkers" pose.

KAT

Stop doing that.

TARA

What?

Kat sends her up, finding new and ridiculous poses to justify covering her chin with her hands.

KAT

(pointing at Tara's pose)
I call this one the "thinker." It's
just a pimple. You should wear it
with pride.

Tara doesn't laugh. Ethan is walking by with a mate. He stops when he sees Kat, a look of brotherly concern.

ETHAN

Hey Kitty Kat, what happened there?

He points down to her shirt. Kat looks down and he flicks her nose.

KAT

Gosh, did you think that one up all
by yourself?

Ethan ignores her, turning on Tara. Tara's desperately hoping he won't say anything about last night in front of Kat.

ETHAN

Tara about that -

Tara tries to make her "thinker"'s pose look natural.

ETHAN

- thing you've got on your...

Is he talking about her pimple? Tara looks down at where's he's pointing.

Ethan can't believe how easy it is. He flicks her nose and laughs at Tara's horrified expression.

As Ethan and his mate head off down the corridor, Tara fumes.
That's it.

TARA

He's only two years older. Where
does he get off treating me like a
little kid?

She spits the last word out.

KAT

Maybe because you lose the capacity
to talk in complete sentences
around him?

Kat mirrors back the "thinker" pose and starts mimicking Tara, unconsciously channeling her last night.

KAT

Oh, um, so, Ethan, do you, would
you...

Tara is so not amused.

9

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 2

9

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

Girls' classical class: The girls are doing plies at the barre. Miss Raine walks down the line, everyone is dressed identically in leotards and tights. She barks comments as she inspects the girls. Tara braces herself for the inevitable.

MISS RAINE

...Katrina, your hair is a mess.
Tara, posture. Tail in, shoulders
back.

She stops at the front of the class and takes in Abigail.

Abigail, usually so perfectly dressed, is wearing her baggy, knitted crossover. She plies perfectly, studiously trying to avoid Miss Raine's stare.

Miss Raine stops the music. The girls stop their exercise to watch.

MISS RAINÉ

Abigail, you're out of uniform.

ABIGAIL

I'm still a little cold.

MISS RAINÉ

Were you here for warm up?

ABIGAIL

Of course.

MISS RAINÉ

Then take that thing off. I need to be able to correct your body. Unless you think I have nothing to teach you?

Kat and Tara are surprised by this dressing down of Abigail.

ABIGAIL

(shakes her head)

Of course not Miss Raine but... actually I think I might be coming down with something. I feel a bit shivery.

Miss Raine stares at Abigail. She's not buying her act.

MISS RAINÉ

Miss Armstrong, you are either ready to work or at the doctor. Which is it?

Abigail stares at Miss Raine for a moment then shocks everyone by walking out.

Miss Raine raises an eyebrow and hits play again on the stereo and the class resumes.

10

INT. ACADEMY/SCHOOL DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY 2
ABIGAIL, DOCTOR WICKS

10

Abigail sits on an examination bed opposite DOCTOR WICKS.

DOCTOR WICKS

Your temperature's fine. Let's check your glands.

(MORE)

DOCTOR WICKS (CONT'D)
(feeling around her neck)
Is that tender?

Abigail shakes her head. She doesn't want to be here but knows she has no choice.

DOCTOR WICKS
Okay. Slip your crossover off and I'll listen to your lungs.

Abigail freezes.

ABIGAIL
Is that necessary? It's more of a head cold.

She coughs convincingly to demonstrate.

DOCTOR WICKS
I need to find out if there's something in your chest.

ABIGAIL
But can't you do it over my top? It's freezing in here.

Dr Wicks shakes her head. Abigail reluctantly wriggles out of her crossover, hating every second of this. She stares at her reflection in the mirror opposite.

Dr Wicks pulls down the back of Abigail's leotard and goes to put the stethoscope against her back but stops. Abigail's boob tube covers the place she should put the stethoscope and her sports bra is so tight it's digging into the skin of her shoulders. The doctor notices, tries to be kind.

DOCTOR WICKS
That sports bra seems a little tight. Maybe you need to go up a size?

ABIGAIL
Maybe I didn't come here for fashion advice.

Dr Wicks raises an eyebrow but decides not to say anything. She listens to Abigail's chest, who is still seething.

ABIGAIL
Not that it's any of your business, but I'm the same size I've always been.

Dr Wicks removes her stethoscopic.

DOCTOR WICKS
Well your lungs are clear.

ABIGAIL

But I do have a cough, right? I don't want to make it worse.

She coughs to make her point as she grabs her crossover and starts getting dressed again. Dr Wicks studies her patient intently. She's seen this behaviour before.

DOCTOR WICKS

Abigail, you do know that for your height and weight you're in perfect proportion, don't you? It's normal to be developing like this. Most girls -

Abigail jumps down off the bed. This is the worst thing she could hear.

ABIGAIL

I'm not developing and I'm certainly not most girls.

DOCTOR WICKS

Right. You're a highly disciplined elite athlete but even you can't control -

But Abigail doesn't want to hear another word about breasts, bras or anything else. She's in a fury.

ABIGAIL

Look, can we take the puberty lecture as given? I need a note for Miss Raine's class.

11

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 2

11

SAMMY, CHRISTIAN, SEAN, PATRICK, N/S FIRST YEAR BOYS

Boys' classical ballet: Intense music is blaring. It is near the end of the class. Sweat is pouring off the boys. Patrick dances alongside the boys calling the steps as he performs them.

PATRICK

Entrechat up, up. And prepare for the double tour... Use your gluts. (adjust)

The boys execute the final tour en lair. Christian jumps higher than anyone else.

PATRICK

Better. That's it for today everyone.

He shuts the music off. The boys collect their stuff to leave.

As Patrick turns his back, Sean spots Sammy bending over to grab his bag. The chunky white elastic belt of his underwear is visible above his tights. It's too good an opportunity for Sean to miss.

SEAN

Hey Lieberman, what's this?

With a look to his mates, Sean gives Sammy a wedgie.

SAMMY

Owww!

Sammy goes down and Sean and his mates howl with laughter. But their glee only lasts for a moment as the very next second, Christian grabs a handful of Sean's shirt and slams him against the wall.

CHRISTIAN

Something funny?

He can't stand ballet boys but he hates bullies even more. This gets Patrick's attention.

PATRICK

Is this a ballet school or a boxing ring?

Patrick storms over and pulls Christian off a still smirking Sean. Patrick glances at Sammy who is trying to de-tangle his undies and clocks the situation.

PATRICK

Right, Sean, you can explain to Mr. Kennedy why you think wedgies are so hilarious. The rest of you -- out of here. Now.

Sean saunters out trying to look tough. He glares at Sammy. Christian goes to leave with the others.

PATRICK

Christian, not so fast.

Patrick gives Sammy a hand up. He takes in the chunky elastic belt top of his underpants above his tights.

PATRICK

Lieberman, where's your dance belt?

Not the sympathetic comment Sammy was expecting. He tries to look defiant.

SAMMY

I don't believe in them, sir.

The comment gets a snicker from the few boys left in the room. Patrick won't have it.

PATRICK

Don't be ridiculous. It's uniform.
Every male dancer wears support.

SAMMY

I swear, I really don't own one.

Patrick looks between Christian and Sammy.

PATRICK

Well I don't know how you've
managed to get away with that one,
but your little rebellion is
officially over. I'm giving you a
note to miss study period; you're
going on a shopping trip.

He hands the note to a very reluctant Sammy.

PATRICK

Oh and Christian? You're his
wingman.

Christian can't believe it.

CHRISTIAN

What? What's this got to do with
me?

PATRICK

Consider it character building.

12

INT. ACADEMY/CORRIDOR - DAY 2

12

TARA, ETHAN, ETHAN'S MATE, DAMIEN, 2 X FIRST YEAR GIRLS
(BONNIE AND HAZEL), N/S STUDENTS

Tara is listening to girly sad music on her ear buds as she
walks down the corridor.

Ethan strides past, not a care in the world as he messes
around with his mate. He doesn't even glance in her
direction.

Tara scowls, absentmindedly touching her pimple. *It's so not
fair.*

A hand taps Tara on the shoulder. Tara steels herself. She's
in no mood for any more practical jokes. She turns slowly
around to find -- a TALL, HANDSOME MAN smiling down on her.

The light reflected off the water has given him a halo. He
looks like something out of a fantasy. He's a GOD!

The music reaches a crescendo. Only then does Tara realise
that the man is talking to her but she can't hear a word.
Tara takes out her earphones.

DAMIEN

... Webster?

Tara just gapes.

DAMIEN

You're Tara Webster, right?

Tara can't believe this is happening.

TARA

Yes but... You're in the Company.
You're Damien Lang.

DAMIEN

(grins)

Damo. And sorry - I've been meaning
to track you down since we got back
from tour.

TARA

You have?

She smiles at Damien. This is so cool. Until...

TARA

Did Kat put you up to this?

DAMIEN

No...

He looks a little guilty.

DAMIEN

My mother did. Shirley Lang? She
knows your mum from the Country
Women's Association.

Tara deflates a little. *Why else would he be talking to her.*

TARA

Of course. Miss Shirley. She
adjudicates the Eisteddfod. She's
terrifying.

(she stops herself)

In a good way.

Damien just laughs. He likes her honesty.

DAMIEN

So now you see why I had to come
say hello when she asked me to.

In the background, a couple of first year girls, BONNIE and HAZEL, have stopped in their tracks staring at the "Company star" talking to Tara.

Damien puts his hands in his pockets and smiles indulgently as Tara babbles.

TARA

My mum is going to flip when I tell her I met you. We saw you dance once at the Easter Show. And when you got into the Company there was like a parade in your honour. You're a legend.

DAMIEN

Only locally.

He takes Tara's hand and bows. The girls in the background gasp.

DAMIEN

Well, a pleasure Miss Webster. I'll have to listen to my mother more often.

Damien heads off down the corridor. Bonnie and Hazel, who've been watching them, descend on Tara. They're agog.

BONNIE

That was Damien Lang.

TARA

Yep. Damo.

HAZEL

How do you know him?

There is no way Tara's going to admit that Damo's mother knows her mother from the CWA. For once in her life, Tara is cool.

TARA

Just through... mutual "associations"... back home.

Tara puts her headphones back in before they can ask anything more, and makes a hasty exit down the hall. The girls are left staring.

13

EXT. FERRY - DAY 2
CHRISTIAN, SAMMY, EXTRAS

13

Christian and Sammy are on the ferry together. They are also attracting attention as Sammy loudly rants at Christian about the horrors of dance belts.

SAMMY

You have to admit it - dance belts are hot and uncomfortable.

(MORE)

SAMMY (CONT'D)

They look stupid. They stink. And they're unhygienic.

CHRISTIAN

You can wash them.

Sammy jumps on this to prove his case.

SAMMY

Have you ever seen me do my washing? I take it home to my mum. I can't ask her to go there.

Christian groans. He tries to escape to the back of the ferry. But Sammy follows him out.

SAMMY

You know, what's happening to us is a form of oppression.

Christian stares longingly at the shore.

CHRISTIAN

Reckon if I jumped I'd make it to shore without drowning?

SAMMY

I think it'd be dangerous to your health. Like a dance belt.

Christian has had enough. He puts his ear buds in and starts to listen to his music. But Sammy won't give up. He's enjoying himself.

SAMMY

Seriously, I've done the research. Do you have any idea what overheating can do to a man's sperm count?

That's one piece of information too much for Christian. He cranks the volume on his player. Sammy shouts over the noise.

SAMMY

WHAT ABOUT WHEN I WANT TO HAVE CHILDREN?

14

EXT. ACADEMY/CAFE - DAY 2

ABIGAIL, TARA, DAMIEN, ETHAN, N/S BONNIE, N/S HAZEL, N/S STUDENTS

14

Despite being a beautiful day, Abigail looks utterly miserable as she stands at the cafe cart.

She stares at the choices of food and drinks, grabs a chocolate power bar then stops herself.

Grabbing water and carrot sticks instead. She goes to walk away then impulsively turns back, grabs the chocolate bar and slams into Tara.

Everything in Abigail's arms crashes to the ground. Tara takes out her headphones and tries to help Abigail gather up all the fallen items.

TARA

Sorry.

ABIGAIL

Do you work at being annoying or does it just come naturally?

She glances at Tara's upper body - annoyingly flat chested in her leotard. That's another thing that comes naturally.

TARA

I didn't see you there.

She hands Abigail up the chocolate bar. Abigail fumes.

ABIGAIL

That's not mine. I don't eat chocolate.

TARA

Are you sure? Because -

Tara holds it up to her. Abigail mimics Tara's voice, making it high pitched and squeaky.

ABIGAIL

"Are you sure because..." What are you, five? Just - get out of my way, all right.

Abigail storms away leaving Tara on her hands and knees, humiliated. Everyone is staring at her. A man's voice cuts through the air.

DAMIEN (O.S.)

Need a hand?

Tara looks up to find Damien. He takes her hand and helps her up. A knight in shining armour. They both look after Abigail, tearing down the wharf.

DAMIEN

There's one in every year. Are you okay?

TARA

Yeah. I just have this skill at making a fool of myself.

She points out all the people staring at her. The first one she sees is Ethan. He looks away, a little curious that Damo is talking to a first year.

Bonnie and Hazel, from the corridor, are watching Tara and Damo's every move.

Damien turns Tara away from them. Rests an arm around her shoulders.

DAMIEN

You can't let people in this place get to you. You're from Mallee country. We're supposed to be tough.

Tara looks at him and laughs.

TARA

Right. Real tough.

Damo glances at the chocolate bar in her hand.

DAMIEN

Gonna eat that?

TARA

Oh I definitely need chocolate.

Damien grabs another chocolate for himself. Pays for them both.

TARA

Thanks. And you know, for the advice...

Tara struggles to open her chocolate bar, clumsy and embarrassed.

DAMIEN

Hand it over.

She grins as Damien opens up the chocolate bar for her. A new friend.

CUT TO:

Every single person at the Cafe is watching them now. From a distance, they look an "item." Bonnie and Hazel are talking to the other girls at their table. It's like watching a brushfire spread.

Tara is in the empty dressing room. She stands examining her pimple in the mirror. It's time for a change.

Tara reaches down into her bag. Pulls out cover up, eyeliner, mascara, eyeshadow, lipstick, the lot.

Tara starts to apply make-up as Kat comes racing in. She can hardly contain herself.

KAT

Step away from the pimple. It is going to pop all by itself when I tell you what I just heard.

She stops when she sees Tara's face - she has unblended blotches of concealer all over her face.

KAT

Wow. Artistic.

Kat jumps onto the bench, enjoying this immensely.

KAT

Okay, so two of the most stuck up girls in second year just bombarded me with questions about how long you've been dating Damien Lang.

Tara is stunned.

TARA

Damo? No way.

Kat nods: way.

KAT

Right now the entire school is obsessing about it.

Tara has to laugh.

TARA

What did you tell them?

KAT

That I was not at liberty to discuss your personal life. I think they took that as a definite yes.

Tara grins. She's not sure how to feel about this news.

KAT

So I assume there's nothing you're keeping from me?

Tara rolls her eyes: as if.

TARA

Our Mums know each other...

She stares at her reflection in the mirror.

TARA

... But if people want to talk, who am I to take that away from them?

KAT

What? You're not going to clear your good name?

TARA

(shrugs)

It's not like I started the rumour.

Tara tosses her hair, feigning confidence.

TARA

I could totally date a Company member, don't you think? I'm not some dumb kid.

She grimaces, remembering the night before's rejection. Kat clasps her heart.

KAT

So proud, right now.

Tara tries to act casual as she applies the rest of her lipstick.

TARA

I wonder if Ethan's heard about us already? Damo and me.

Kat rolls her eyes.

KAT

Less proud.

Tara continues with her make-up application and makes a face at Kat.

16

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 2

16

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

Abigail's alone with Miss Raine in the studio before class.

ABIGAIL

The doctor said I'm well enough to dance but as a medical precaution I should keep my crossover on. In case I'm coming down with the flu.

MISS RAINE

I'm intrigued to see the note.

ABIGAIL

She didn't put that bit in writing but wanted me to tell you.

MISS RAINE

The note.

Abigail reluctantly hands it over. Miss Raine reads it.

MISS RAINE

I don't know what's got into you, Abigail. All that's written here is that you present with symptoms not inconsistent with a slight cold. I suppose if that's the case you can sit the class out.

ABIGAIL

But I do feel well enough to dance...

MISS RAINE

Then you will abide by my uniform code.

Abigail sees her reflection in the mirror. She can't let Miss Raine see that her body is changing. Abigail goes to the corner and sits down on the floor.

Miss Raine has no sympathy for her. She opens the door to the class.

MISS RAINE

Ladies who are prepared to dance...

The other girls pile in all staring at Abigail. Abigail's face is stony.

17 **EXT. DANCE WEAR SHOP - DAY 2**
NIL CAST

17

Establish the dance wear shop amongst a row of other stores.

18 **INT. DANCE WEAR SHOP - DAY 2**
CHRISTIAN, SAMMY, HAYLEY

18

Sammy holds up a dance belt between two fingers. A look of disgust on his face. Christian is trying to ignore him as Sammy flicks the G-string thong.

SAMMY

If I wanted a wedgie, I'd just ask Sean.

Christian is so over this.

CHRISTIAN

We're here. You're buying it.

In the background, a good looking young assistant, HAYLEY, checks the two of them out before approaching.

HAYLEY

Hi, you guys need some help?

Sammy hides the embarrassing item behind his back.

SAMMY

Nope. Browsing.

He tries to wander away. Christian pulls him back.

CHRISTIAN

He needs a dance belt.

Hayley doesn't bat an eyelid. She turns to Sammy.

HAYLEY

What size do you want?

SAMMY

I don't actually want one. I don't believe in their validity or necessity.

Christian groans.

HAYLEY

I think you'll find they're not that bad once you get used to them. Am I right?

Hayley looks to Christian with a cheeky smile. Sammy clocks the look. Christian is oblivious. He shrugs, still annoyed.

HAYLEY

So what size do you think you are?

Sammy stops hiding the dance belt behind his back and brings it up to his face, studying the padded pouch that will hold his "crown jewels." Sammy makes his determination.

SAMMY

What's your biggest?

Christian bursts out laughing. *In your dreams.* Hayley takes control.

HAYLEY

(to Sammy)

It's based on jeans size.

SAMMY

Oh, right. I'm a 28.

She hands him a medium dancebelt in a box.

HAYLEY

Why don't you give this one a try?

She smiles warmly at the boys. She's so darn cute, it's hard for Sammy not to do as she says.

HAYLEY

Over your underpants. Hygiene.

Ouch. Sammy could live without that humiliating touch. He heads over to the change room. He sneaks a look back at Hayley. She's studiously checking Christian out. But Christian is oblivious.

Sammy sighs and goes inside the change room.

SAMMY (O.S.)

How do you know which bit goes...
Surely, there should be a
diagram...

Christian closes his eyes. More to the point, how in the world did *he* get *here*?

19

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 2

19

TARA, KAT, ABIGAIL, MISS RAINÉ, N/S FIRST YEAR GIRLS

Girls' classical ballet class: The class is finishing. Abigail sits out the class on the sidelines, Tara has been moved to the front row. Miss Rainé is watching her carefully. Tara is thrilled. The music stops. The girls perform a reverence to Miss Rainé.

MISS RAINÉ

Remember your epaulment ...
Artistry.... And sustain it to the
end... thank you all.

The girls politely clap their teacher at the end of class. Miss Rainé focuses on Tara and gives a rare smile.

MISS RAINÉ

Tara, come down to the front so I
can demonstrate something to the
class.

Tara looks secretly pleased as she races to stand next to Miss Rainé. Miss Rainé holds Tara's face up to the light.

MISS RAINÉ

Girls, let me draw your attention
to the hideous amount of make up
Tara has decided to inflict on
herself.

A couple of girls start to giggle. Abigail looks momentarily cheered.

MISS RAINÉ

I'd like to remind you that even though make up is allowed, it should be kept tasteful.

For a moment, Tara almost loses it. But then she takes a deep breath and removes Miss Rainé's hands from her face.

TARA

(gathering courage)

Miss Rainé, I'm sorry to disagree but I believe I'm old enough to decide what I put on my face. And though you may not like the way I look -- I do.

Kat is so shocked by Tara's outburst, she starts to clap. There is a moment when everyone is tempted to join in. But Miss Rainé squashes any attempt at rebellion.

MISS RAINÉ

Thank you for that opinion, Tara. But this is my class and that means no excessive make up.

Miss Rainé turns to Abigail.

MISS RAINÉ

And proper attire. At all times.

20

INT. DANCE WEAR SHOP - DAY 2
CHRISTIAN, SAMMY, HAYLEY

20

Sammy is still in the change room hidden by the curtain. It's been a while. Hayley and Christian share a look.

HAYLEY

(calling out to Sammy)

Everything all right in there?

SAMMY (O.S.)

All good. Christian, can you come here?

Christian pretends he hasn't heard him.

SAMMY (O.S.)

Christian?

Christian gives Hayley an embarrassed smile then goes to stand outside the dressing room.

CHRISTIAN

What can be so hard? If you think I'm gonna demonstrate -

Sammy pokes his head out, speaks in private.

SAMMY

Nothing. It's easy. And
surprisingly comfortable.

Christian could kill him.

CHRISTIAN

So why are you taking so long?

SAMMY

I've been giving you two some
time... How'd you go? I heard her
laugh.

Sammy's completely lost Christian.

CHRISTIAN

What?

Sammy gestures to Hayley on the other side of the shop.

SAMMY

She's been checking you out. Don't
you think she's cute?

Christian just stares. Sammy seizes the moment.

SAMMY

Hey Hayley...

Hayley turns around. Christian grits his teeth.

SAMMY

I take back everything I said about
dance belts. I'm gonna take five.
Can I try some shorts over them?

HAYLEY

Sure thing.

SAMMY

My mate Christian's going help you
pick some out.

Christian looks murderously at Sammy as he pushes him towards
Hayley. She smiles and Christian has no choice but to go
over.

21

EXT. FERRY - DAY 2

CHRISTIAN, SAMMY, HAYLEY'S VOICE MESSAGE (V.O), N/S
PASSENGERS

21

Sammy and Christian are at the front of the ferry, hanging
over the side.

SAMMY
(mock outraged)
... on a silver platter and you
died in there.

CHRISTIAN
Did I?

Christian shows Sammy his phone where Hayley's number is now stored.

SAMMY
What? How?

Christian shrugs - *he has his ways*. But Sammy is not buying the act.

SAMMY
Nuh. Don't believe it. You just -

Christian hands him the phone daring him to call it. Sammy calls his bluff and puts it on speaker. It's ringing. Ringing. Then goes to message bank.

HAYLEY'S VOICE MESSAGE (V.O)
Hi, it's Hayley. Pretty soon
there's gonna be a little beep. Be
brave. Leave a message.

Christian smiles - *see?* Sammy can't believe it.

There's a beep. Christian is expecting Sammy to hand back the phone but he's too quick.

SAMMY
(doing his best Christian
imitation)
Ahh, Hayley... It's Christian being
brave... Call me... Or whatever.

He hits end.

CHRISTIAN
Worst impression of me I've ever
heard.

SAMMY
(agrees)
Right. Too articulate.

Christian has to laugh, despite himself.

The ferry steams across the harbour. The sun starting to go down over the shimmering city skyline.

KAT

Tiara, mascara wand down. We're gonna be late for breakfast.

She opens the door, catching Abigail standing in front of the mirror. She's wearing a sports bra, with her leotard around her waist and has obviously been crying.

Abigail freaks out, her hands fly to cover her chest.

ABIGAIL

Get out!

Kat is taken aback by Abigail's appearance and vehemence.

KAT

Whoah. Banshee.

ABIGAIL

You have no right to barge into people's rooms like that.

Kat turns for the door.

KAT

Happily leaving you to your little psycho drama.

Abigail doesn't respond. She's wriggled into her leotard and is now throwing on her crossover, trying very hard to pretend she isn't crying. Kat feels a pang and stops. She sighs, not wanting to do this.

KAT

So a person could think there was something wrong.

ABIGAIL

(quietly)

Leave me alone, Kat.

KAT

It's just that your tear ducts don't normally overflow like that and -

On cue Abigail's eyes spill over again. Kat grabs the tissue box that's beside Tara's bed and gingerly passes her one, almost as if she's feeding a wild animal.

KAT

Come on. I've known you since we were five and you never walk out of class. It's disturbing my sense of the universe.

Abigail angrily blows her nose.

ABIGAIL

You are the last person who'd understand.

Kat struggles to retain her patience.

KAT

So just for the exercise, pretend I'm someone else.

Abigail looks at her and gives up.

ABIGAIL

Okay. All right. You want to know what's wrong? Tell me what you see?

She removes her crossover.

KAT

(shrugs)

Um... A really boring leotard?

Abigail is scornful.

ABIGAIL

Like you haven't noticed.

KAT

Honestly, you look exactly the same.

ABIGAIL

What about these?

She gestures to her chest, hating them. Kat can't believe it.

KAT

That's what you're stressing about? They don't look any different.

Abigail shakes her head - she doesn't believe her.

KAT

Anyway, I have "these". I have bigger "these". Thankfully.

ABIGAIL

But I'm going to be a principal dancer and principals don't. They just don't. They're ethereal. They look like... (trails off)

KAT

Who? Tara?

Abigail looks at her, caught. Her silence tells Kat she's right.

KAT

Not all of them have flat chests,
that's old school. Take my mum,
"world famous, principal ballerina"
- yes. Fried eggs on her chest -
no.

ABIGAIL

Natasha's one in a million, a
genetic freak.

Kat uses all of her willpower not to bite back.

KAT

Abi, you've literally spent years
stepping over everyone to get this
far. Are you really gonna let a
little bit of "this" stop you now?

Abigail doesn't believe her.

ABIGAIL

You all want me to fail. This must
be the funniest thing that's
happened in years.

Kat really can't believe it's gone this far.

KAT

First - no matter what you do, you
will never be funny, and second -
that cross-over is so last winter.

And she leaves Abigail in the room by herself.

26

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 3

26

CHRISTIAN, SAMMY, N/S FIRST YEARS (BOYS AND GIRLS)

Mixed pas de deux warm up: Christian warms up. Sammy comes
in and stands next to him awkward as hell. The colour of
beetroot.

SAMMY

We need to talk.... about
"privacy". I mean, if we're going
to share a room maybe we need to
get a lock or some sort of colour
coded schedule.

CHRISTIAN

Shut up.

Sammy goes quiet. This is not going well.

CHRISTIAN

Hold up your hand and make a fist.

Sammy does so reluctantly. *Great.* Now he's going to have to fight Christian. But Christian just leads him over to the door. And shows him how to knock. Christian acts out his response.

CHRISTIAN
(doing his best Sammy
impersonation)
Just a minute... Ahh, come in,
Christian.

Sammy smiles sheepishly. Nothing more needs to be said.

27

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 3

27

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

Mixed pas de deux class: The class has filled up. Sammy and Christian are standing together in the centre of the studio.

Abigail enters with Kat and looks around, still self conscious. She nervously removes her baggy crossover top. No one even glances at her. Kat looks at her pointedly, *see.* They peel off in different directions as Abigail goes to the front of the room and Kat joins the boys. Back to normal.

KAT
Yo Sammy. Where you been?

SAMMY
Um... We had to do this... thing.
You know, guy stuff.

Sammy shoots a look at Christian. He smirks.

KAT
Is something different. Have you
cut your hair?

Sammy blushes as she studies him closely; hoping she doesn't clock the new presence of his dance belt. Sammy is trying to come up with something to say as Tara races in. She's out of breath and her eyes are gleaming excitement.

TARA
(To Kat)
The rumour's reached the third
years.

KAT
I know, I was just talking to
Ethan.

Tara looks up - could it really be working this well? Kat stops her dead.

KAT

Don't get any ideas.

At that moment, Patrick walks in to get the class started.

PATRICK

Okay, everyone find their partners... except you, Tara. Mr Kennedy wants to see you in his office.

Tara doesn't move. She looks around confused.

PATRICK

I'd get a move on.

28

INT. ACADEMY/MR KENNEDY'S OFFICE/CORRIDOR - DAY 3

28

TARA, MR KENNEDY, MISS RAINE, DAMIEN

Tara stands at Mr. Kennedy's door and knocks.

MR. KENNEDY (O.S.)

Enter.

Tara's heart sinks when she sees Mr. Kennedy, Miss Raine and Damien. Damien's face is red. He stares at his feet.

MR. KENNEDY

(grave)

Tara. I need to ask you some questions. Damien - give us the room.

Damien gets up to go. Flustered, Tara goes to stop him.

TARA

No! I think there's... He doesn't have to leave.

MR KENNEDY

(gentle)

We need to talk privately. A staff member has come to me with a disturbing rumour. One every student in the school seems to be discussing.

TARA

But it's not his fault. It's mine...

MR KENNEDY

The reason we have a policy about students dating company members is to protect them both - from gossip and from unfair pressure.

MISS RAINE

Tara, you might feel like you need to cover for Damien but he is the one who -

Tara blurts it out.

TARA

It's all made up.

And now they're listening. Tara pauses - this is hard.

TARA

Not by me exactly but, see... our mothers know each other and some girls saw us talking and then this rumour took on a life of it's own. And I probably could've... I definitely could've... said something but instead I... I guess I just thought...

MISS RAINE

You thought what?

She can't say it was all to impress Ethan.

TARA

... I never meant it to get this far. Or for anyone to get in trouble.

Mr. Kennedy puts a hand on Damien's shoulder. He's off the hook.

MR KENNEDY

A story like this could have ruined Damien's career and hurt yours as well.

Tara's chin is trembling as she tries hard not to cry.

MR KENNEDY

I'm extremely disappointed in you, Tara.

29

INT. ACADEMY/CORRIDOR - DAY 3

TARA, DAMIEN

29

Damien is heading down the corridor, when Tara rounds the corner.

TARA

Damien!

Tara runs after him. Damien doesn't stop. He's too shaken.

DAMIEN

I can't talk to you anymore. Stay away from me.

TARA

Please, stop. Please... I'm so sorry.

Damien finally slows down but he can't look at her.

DAMIEN

Why did you do it?

TARA

I was... it's stupid. I can't explain.

DAMIEN

Try.

TARA

There's this... guy. He's in third year and I thought... I thought if he knew that someone older liked me he might... see me differently.

Tara starts to cry. Damien can't quite contain his anger.

DAMIEN

I just watched my career almost get wiped out because of some stupid schoolgirl crush?

TARA

I'm sorry.

But "sorry" doesn't cut it. He goes to walk away then stops.

DAMIEN

You know, when I first talked to you I thought how great it was to meet a kid at the Academy who was so real. I felt proud that we were from the same place.

Tara looks down, ashamed and now crying in earnest. Damien lets go a tiny bit of his anger.

DAMIEN

You shouldn't be in such a hurry to grow up.

Tara watches as Damien's figure recedes into the distance.

Ethan smiles.

ETHAN

Hey.

TARA

Hi.

ETHAN

You causing trouble again?

Tara can barely respond. She smiles weakly.

TARA

Some.

Ethan studies her face.

ETHAN

You know, you look better without
make-up.

And with another gorgeous grin that could make anyone melt,
he's off. Tara's about to follow when she shakes her head.

TARA

(To herself)

Enough Tara. You are so done.

She closes her eyes and takes a deep breath, feeling that
this is true as she lets Ethan walk away without chasing
after him.

TARA (V.O.)

*And you know what, if I went
straight to that person in Paris,
I'd miss out on all this other
stuff I never could have predicted.*

A water balloon hits her on the back of the head -
unpredicted. Tara turns around to see Kat and Sammy grinning.
Tara stares in amazement. A water fight is taking place
between Sammy, Kat, Sean and a couple of other first years on
the other side of the wharf.

Kat hands Tara a couple of water balloons, including a red
one. They jiggle in her hands. Tara throws her red balloon
high into the air. It stops for a moment, suspended.

And explodes on Sammy, hiding behind a bollard. He pulls a
dance belt out of his bag and waves it at her like a
surrender flag. Kat and Tara just throw two more balloons
his way.

The sun sparkles off the water as Sammy, Kat and Tara run
about, playing like a bunch of kids.

END OF EPISODE.