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Dance Academy

SERIES ONE

EPISODE 21
BLOCK 6

"FOMO: Fear Of Missing Out"

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1 INT. ACADEMY/CORRIDOR - DAY 1 1
TARA, CHRISTIAN, N/S STUDENTS

INTERCUT WITH:

2 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 2
TARA, DR WICKS (O.S.), MALE DOCTOR (O.S.), N/S MEDICS

CORRIDOR: In close-up we see a crutch thumping down the Academy corridor.

TARA (V.O.)
*Growing up, my least favourite
fairytale was The Little Mermaid.*

The CLUNKING SOUND of the crutch hitting the floor bleeds into...

CUT TO:

EMERGENCY ROOM: ... the THUD of hospital bed wheels as they race down a corridor and slam open a door.

TARA (V.O.)
*At fifteen, she decided she was
tired of being magical. She wanted
a human soul - to feel human love.*

Inside the room, feet rush by in all directions. We only hear snippets as the professionals get to work.

DR WICKS (O.S.)
... dislocated patella.

MALE DOCTOR (O.S.)
How long was it out?

DR WICKS (O.S.)
Only a few minutes. But she's a
dancer.

An AMBULANCE SIREN wails in the distance.

CUT TO:

CORRIDOR: Travelling up from the crutch we hover on a girl's leg that's encased in texta-decorated plaster from her upper thigh to just above her ankle. Whoever belongs to the leg is an expert on crutches, using only one to bolt along the corridor.

TARA (V.O.)
*So she traded in her tail for some
guy...*

2

CONTINUED:

2

Beside her, a boy's leg is using the other crutch and keeping up.

CUT TO:

EMERGENCY ROOM: We finally see Tara lying on the hospital bed. Her face is pinched white but she's not screaming or crying. She's just very quiet, almost as if in shock, as people rush by, blurring in front of her.

TARA (V.O.)

*And from then on, every step she
took felt like she was standing on
swords.*

An X-Ray of a knee is projected onto the glowing white screen. The fracture is visible even to an layman eye.

CUT TO:

CORRIDOR: Tara's hair is streaming behind her as she bolts down the corridor. It's Christian who is on the other crutch - and both are grinning exhilarated as they race towards finish line.

TARA (V.O.)

*I never rated that story. If it was
a proper fairytale, she should've
been able to have both.*

3

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 1

3

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

Pas de deux: Abigail and Sammy are performing a lyrical contemporary pas de deux in front of Miss Raine. For once Abigail (wearing pointe shoes) is dancing with vulnerability and emotion. Sammy is confident, not the slightest bit insecure.

The rest of the class are watching on the sidelines, impressed. Everyone is dressed in classical rehearsal gear, slightly more relaxed than technique class but nothing which would offend Miss Raine.

MISS RAINE

Remember this is the first time the
Prince has seen Cinderella. They
can't take their eyes off each
other.

Tara is sitting down the front of the studio, injured leg propped on a cushion. Christian is beside her, idly drawing on her cast with a texta, their closeness indicating a new, easy intimacy.

MISS RAINÉ

Good Abigail. Breathe out through
your port de bras.

A flicker of unease crosses Tara's face as she watches Abigail dance. She turns her attention to the note-pad (where she's supposed to be writing corrections) and instead continues to sketch a formal dress.

MISS RAINÉ

Yes. There's the connection.
Finally, you're showing me some
artistry.

As Abigail soaks up the compliment, Tara's phone begins to vibrate. Christian smirks as Tara scrambles to answer it before Miss Raine notices.

TARA

(whispers, into phone)
Max, I'll have to...

Too late. Miss Raine flicks off the stereo and strides over.

MISS RAINÉ

What is it now Tara? A crisis over
napkin colours?

Miss Raine looms overhead, arm outstretched for the phone.

TARA

(into phone)
... call you back.

Tara hits end and quickly hands Miss Raine the phone.

TARA

Sorry.

MISS RAINÉ

When you requested permission to
stage this social event I was
assured it wouldn't be disruptive.
I'm feeling disrupted.

TARA

I know, Miss Raine. I promise it
won't happen... *(again)*

Christian smirks as Tara's phone starts to vibrate again in Miss Raine's hand. Tara surreptitiously pokes him, trying not to laugh - he isn't helping. Too irritated even to comment, Miss Raine walks away.

MISS RAINÉ

(into phone)
Tara can't talk right now

4

INT. ACADEMY/CORRIDOR - DAY 2

4

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

Classes are over for the day and students are piling out of the studio. Tara has got her phone back and she's walking with Christian. Sammy and Abigail are also walking together, holding hands. Kat is feeling very much like the fifth wheel.

TARA

(into phone)

You are not telling me the snow machine's already booked?... A bubble machine?

She turns to Kat who rolls her eyes as she reads a text message on her own phone.

KAT

So lame it's not even lame enough not to be lame.

TARA

(into phone)

That's a no on the bubbles. Thanks Max.

Tara hangs up the phone.

KAT

I meant the formal in its entirety. One small benefit of this place is we get to miss out on the cheesy high school rituals.

As Tara gapes in indignation, Sammy and Christian launch into their double act. It's an argument that's been going on for weeks and they have it down pat.

SAMMY

(parroting Tara)

But it's the "defining night of our teenage lives".

CHRISTIAN

(parroting Tara)

Just because we're at the Academy we shouldn't have to miss it.

They turn to Tara, grinning. She doesn't immediately realise they're teasing her.

TARA

Exactly.

KAT

Please just admit that the reason you want to do this is because you have a boyfriend.

4

CONTINUED:

4

Christian and Tara smile at each other. Yes, they are now officially going out.

KAT

Formals are only designed for loved up couples to make single people feel like socially challenged losers.

Abigail breaks away from Sammy for a moment.

ABIGAIL

Kat, you don't need a formal to feel that way.

KAT

(ignoring her)

Who am I supposed to go with T?

Sean walks by at that moment and groans at the sight of Sammy and Abigail leaning in for another kiss.

SEAN

Again? People get a room.

Tara looks to Kat. There's an option.

KAT

Not in this lifetime.

5

EXT. OBSERVATORY HILL - DAY 1

5

KAT, ETHAN, TIM

Kat walks up to the hill overlooking the Harbour. Ethan and Tim have been working out on the open-air exercise equipment. Dripping in sweat, they're just finishing up.

KAT

Tell me you two aren't secretly in love?

TIM

If only your brother here would make a move.

Kat smiles at Tim, she has a lot of time for him. He grabs his stuff to go.

TIM

All right, I'm out. Mate we've just got to remember it doesn't matter who it is... so long as it's one of us.

Tim grips Ethan's hand in a manshake. He's obviously pumped about something.

ETHAN

You know it.

Tim heads out. Kat turns to Ethan, expectantly.

ETHAN

So you've heard about Damien Lang?

Kat's nose wrinkles, suspiciously

KAT

Have I been summoned here for
ballet gossip?

ETHAN

His knee still hasn't improved.
There's a lot of ligament damage.

KAT

You know, it's bad karma to look
excited by that? Tara has the exact
same injury.

Ethan brushes this aside. His eyes are gleaming with
excitement.

ETHAN

Listen for a second. The Company is
contemplating a shuffle up, taking
a Third Year early.

Even Kat can acknowledge that this is major news.

KAT

Wow. So you and Tim are in the mix?

Ethan looks over to where Tim is disappearing, making sure
he's out of earshot.

ETHAN

You can't say anything - they have
to be seen to interview people -
but I got the heads up that they
want it to be me.

Ethan pauses so she understands the magnitude of what he's
telling her.

ETHAN

Kat, if Damo doesn't make it back,
I'm in the Company.

6

EXT. ACADEMY/WHARFSIDE - DAY 1

6

TARA, CHRISTIAN, DR WICKS, 2 X DANCERS (GIRLS), N/S STUDENTS

Tara is standing on the wharf, waiting for Christian. She watches as one girl teaches another Cinderella's part in the repertoire dance. They're wearing flip-flops but can still jump and turn - all the things Tara can't.

DR WICKS (O.S.)

Missing it?

Tara turns around and sees Dr Wicks approaching behind her. She quickly smiles, ignoring the question.

TARA

Dr Wicks. I didn't see you.

DR WICKS

I don't want you to be nervous about today. We'll be able to tell more once the plaster's off.

TARA

I'm not nervous.

Dr Wicks doesn't entirely believe her. She's seen this sort of bravado before.

DR WICKS

If it hasn't healed properly there are other options.

Tara keeps nodding with false confidence as Christian approaches. Dr Wicks smiles reassuringly at Tara once more and walks towards the Academy.

CHRISTIAN

Everything okay?

Tara really doesn't want to talk about it. They start walking/hopping down the wharfside.

TARA

Yeah. Just boring doctor stuff.

CHRISTIAN

Want to bore me with the details?

He's keeping it light and casual but does actually want to be involved in what's going on. Tara smiles.

TARA

Details hey? How are you with fairy lights? Finger food? Streamers? This formal's not going to plan itself.

6

CONTINUED:

6

Formal detail. Christian scoops Tara up and carries her down the wharf. She squeals in protest but is loving every minute of it, leg troubles forgotten.

7

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 1

7

ABIGAIL, SAMMY

Abigail and Sammy are spending their afternoon in the studio, practising the Prince and Cinderella contemporary pas de deux. His hands are around her waist as she extends down into penche. Abigail draws back up, pulling her leg into retire. Sammy turns her so she's facing him. Their faces are suddenly only inches away from each other, the air is electric...

They can't help themselves and start to kiss. Abigail stumbles off pointe and down onto Sammy's toe.

SAMMY

ABIGAIL

Ow.

Sorry.

It doesn't stop them for even a moment and the temperature rises a few notches. But as Sammy puts his hands on Abigail's face, his watch somehow snags her hair.

ABIGAIL

SAMMY

Your watch. It's... (*got my hair*)

Here. I can...

Sammy tries to tug it free, forcing them to come up for air, both trying to get their breathing under control.

ABIGAIL

We probably should stop anyway.
From the penche?

SAMMY

Um. Just give me a second.

Red-faced, Sammy takes a couple of deep breaths, trying to get himself back under control. Abigail laughs.

ABIGAIL

Sorry I didn't realise this was
torture.

SAMMY

Yeah, well I thought about charging
you for war crimes but um...

Sammy musters up the guts to broach the subject he's been thinking about.

SAMMY

Actually have you ever... you
know... we've been doing this for a
while now... it could be worth
discussing...

ABIGAIL

The next level?

Sammy shrugs, heart in mouth. Abigail is direct but not mean - she's been thinking about it too.

ABIGAIL

We're not ready.

SAMMY

Right. No. I didn't think so either.

ABIGAIL

Now from the penche? Or do you need more time?

A grin is twitching at her lips.

SAMMY

Funny.

They go back to working on the pas de deux together. Sammy takes a few deep breaths - what just happened there?

INT. ACADEMY/SCHOOL DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY 1

ETHAN, DR WICKS

Ethan has been sitting on the examination bed in Dr Wicks' office. He slips his t-shirt back on while Dr Wicks writes a note on the medical assessment sheet.

ETHAN

So what's the verdict?

Ethan looks up at the Doctor, nervous. This is one of the most important moments of his life. She keeps her attention on her assessment sheet.

DR WICKS

Obnoxiously healthy. I'm going to recommend to the Company you can start work immediately.

Dr Wicks finally looks at Ethan, smiling. He smacks a kiss on her cheek.

ETHAN

Marry me. I'm serious doc, let's run away together.

INT. ACADEMY/DOCTOR'S OFFICE/WAITING ROOM - DAY 2

ETHAN, DR WICKS, DAMIEN

Ethan is on a high as he enters the waiting room. Dr Wicks enters behind him and takes her clipboard over to the reception area.

DR WICKS

(warm)

Damien, you can go on through.

Ethan looks over to the seat where Damo has been waiting. Damo grabs his crutches, wincing as he stands.

DAMIEN

How's it going Ethan?

Damo musters a smile, knowing why Ethan's probably there but not holding it against him. Ethan feels a prick of guilt.

ETHAN

Good. You?

Damo gestures down to the his leg and shrugs - he's been better. Dr Wicks looks up from her notes and over to Damo.

DR WICKS

You haven't seen Tara Webster?
First year?

DAMIEN

No ma'am.

Ethan clocks this, thinking it's odd that Tara has missed her appointment, as Damien heads into the office.

10

EXT. SYDNEY - TIME LAPSE

10

NIL CAST

Night turns into day over the shimmering Sydney harbour.

11

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO/CORRIDOR - DAY 2

11

TARA, ETHAN, TIM, N/S COUPLE, N/S STUDENTS, N/S FIRST YEARS

Ethan, flanked by Tim, emerges from the studio. He sees Tara standing behind a desk in the nook of the corridor. She's selling formal tickets to a COUPLE. Her sales spiel is down pat and she's in her element, smiling happily as she hands them two tickets.

Ethan locks eyes with Tara. The vibe is awkward, they've barely spoken since they broke up. Tim looks between them.

TIM

I'll... pretend I've got somewhere
to be.

He heads away, leaving them alone. Ethan smiles.

ETHAN

Heard someone's organising a dance.
We don't do that enough?

Tara smiles as well. It's good to talk to him again although he does make her nervous.

TARA

Can I interest you in a ticket?
It's a Winter Wonderland theme. Kat
says that's lame being summer
but...

ETHAN

You've never seen snow.

Tara smiles - exactly. A flicker of old familiarity passes between them. Ethan looks down at her leg encased in plaster.

ETHAN

You should be getting that off soon
right?

The moment's broken as the conversation heads into Tara's least favourite subject.

TARA

Uh-huh. Soon.

Too soon. Ethan searches her face, noticing something's up.

ETHAN

I was at the clinic yesterday. How
come you missed your appointment?

A beat. Tara's bravado cracks a little.

TARA

(lying)
I just got my times wrong.

Ethan knows Tara's hiding something and Tara knows he knows it. Christian approaches. He doesn't exactly love Ethan talking to Tara but is not going to say anything.

CHRISTIAN

Hey.

ETHAN

Hey. I'll get back to you about
that ticket.

Tara nods. As Ethan heads off down the corridor, she grabs her crutches and locks up the money box.

CHRISTIAN

Did I interrupt something?

TARA

Yes, he was asking how my knee was
and no one has in the last five
minutes. I so badly wanted to talk
about it.

11

CONTINUED:

11

Christian nods - fair enough - and drops the subject as they walk towards the studio. Tara's face blanks again as she sees the tutu clad girls entering, carrying their pointe shoes.

TARA

You know, I'm sick of watching and you can't dance without me...

Christian turns to her in surprise.

CHRISTIAN

You're asking me to ditch class?

Tara grins. Ethan glances back just as Christian and Tara sneak past the studio, where First Years are streaming in. They're ducking under the windows so that Miss Raine can't see them. It's made difficult by Tara's crutches but that just makes them laugh more.

Ethan wonders what's going on with Tara. She isn't herself.

12

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 2

12

ABIGAIL, SAMMY, KAT, MISS RAINE, N/S FIRST YEARS

Pas de deux: Couples in the centre are performing the lyrical Cinderella and Prince pas de deux, as before dressed in contemporary clothes.

MISS RAINE

Ladies you're boring me. Cinderella has just arrived at the ball. Let's see a spark of excitement.

Abigail and Sammy are among the couples on the sidelines. Abigail watches Sammy as he practises the port de bras, brow furrowed in deep concentration. His body is lean and strong. He looks gorgeous. Sammy catches Abigail staring.

SAMMY

What?

ABIGAIL

Nothing.

Sammy misinterprets what Abigail is thinking. He stops marking the steps and leans in towards her.

SAMMY

About yesterday, I feel bad it might've seemed like I was...

MISS RAINE

Where's Christian? And Tara?

She looks at Kat who's also on the sidelines. Kat shrugs - she doesn't know either.

MISS RAINÉ

May I remind you all this class is not optional.

As Miss Raine turns her attention back to the dancing, she looks more concerned than angry.

SAMMY

You know, like I was pressuring you? And I don't want you to think that because I really respect...

Abigail turns her attention back to the dancing. She's nervous but trying hard to appear calm and mature.

ABIGAIL

Actually... I've changed my mind. I think we're ready.

Sammy is completely floored.

SAMMY

You do?

MISS RAINÉ

Next group.

As the couples who have been dancing run to the sidelines, Sammy and Abigail replace them in the centre. He's a beat behind her as they begin the pas de deux where they continue the conversation, amongst the other couples, hiding their faces from Miss Raine when she looks their way.

SAMMY

Sorry, stroked out there for a moment. Ready as in...?

ABIGAIL

Ready. But if you don't agree we can wait...

SAMMY

No I'm a guy. I'm hard-wired to think I'm ready.

Miss Raine catches him talking and fires him a dirty look.

MISS RAINÉ

It's ballet Samuel. Communicate through action, not words.

ABIGAIL

Okay then. Let's embrace the cliché at the formal. It'll be special.

There's a hint of softness on the word "special" - this is important to Abigail as well. Sammy puts his hands around her hips and assists her into the air.

12 CONTINUED:

12

MISS RAINE

Good Abigail. Match her Samuel.

Sammy and Abigail keep dancing but we focus on Sammy as he struggles to keep up, nerves taking over from excitement.

13 **EXT. SYDNEY - TIME LAPSE**
NIL CAST

13

The clouds travel at breakneck speed over the water until it's a new day in Sydney.

14 **INT. VINTAGE DRESS SHOP - DAY 3**
TARA, KAT, N/S SHOP ASSISTANT

14

It's late Friday afternoon and Tara has dragged Kat out to buy her formal dress. They're in a fashionable vintage clothes shop, crammed with hats, bags, shoes and dresses from across the eras.

TARA (O.S)

Come on, aren't you worried the best years of our lives are flashing us by...

Kat is bored as she waits outside the velvet curtained change area where Tara is trying on yet another dress.

KAT

While we're stuck dancing? Yeah, it's my constant refrain.

Tara comes out of the change room. She's wearing a short frothy tulle ballerina-style dress and turns her back to Kat so that she can do the zip up.

TARA

Which is what the formal is all about. Avoiding FOMO.

KAT

FOMO?

TARA

Fear Of Missing Out. Come tomorrow night you will feel it when you're at the boarding house in your pjs, and I am at the formal wearing this.

Kat rolls her eyes as Tara twirls, as best she can given the plaster, around in the ridiculous dress.

TARA

It's almost perfect isn't it?

KAT

If you were six and a flowergirl.

Kat puts another couple of dresses in her arms, sending her back into the dressing room.

KAT

You'll thank me.

CUT TO:

Tara emerges from the change room wearing a skimpy black corset dress. Kat grins - much better. Tara looks down at her bust and shakes her head - there's no way in the world she's going to be able to fill that out. Kat hands her some chicken fillet bra inserts. Tara tries to insert them and they slip through her hands.

CUT TO:

Kat has been distracted by the hats and gloves on display. She's busy trying on an extremely over-the-top hairpiece and it takes her a moment to notice that Tara has emerged in a long pink 1950s ballgown.

As Kat sends her back in, Tara steps on the hem with her crutch. The girls hear a sickening rip. Kat ushers Tara quickly inside, out of sight from the Shop Assistant.

CUT TO:

Both girls are now modelling over-the-top 1980s outfits. They pose like rock stars together.

CUT TO:

Kat is searching through the racks yet again as Tara emerges. We don't see the dress Tara's wearing, only Kat's reaction as she puts her hand on her heart like a proud parent. Now that's perfect.

EXT. HARBOURSIDE JOGGING TRACK - DAY 3

SAMMY, CHRISTIAN, N/S EXTRAS

Christian and Sammy are running beside the Harbour. Sammy is wheezing slightly as he tries to keep up.

SAMMY

(deliberately casual)

So you and Tara... How's that going?

Christian just gives him a look - like he doesn't know.

SAMMY

I mean, you're close but you're not you know "close". It's Tara.

Sammy is momentarily thrown by the thought they could be sleeping together.

SAMMY

Tell me you're not.

Christian really doesn't want to talk about it.

CHRISTIAN

No. We're not.

SAMMY

I assume though - can we stop for a second?

They stop and Sammy sucks in lungfuls of air.

SAMMY

... that you've been, you know,
"close" with someone in the past?

CHRISTIAN

Mate, I don't talk about that...
(*kind of stuff*)

SAMMY

Yeah. Of course not.

Sammy tries to keep his voice matter-of-fact as he broaches this awkward subject.

SAMMY

Off the record, would you have any,
I don't know, say, words of wisdom
if someone was thinking about...

This has got Christian's attention.

CHRISTIAN

Really? You and Abigail are...

Sammy drops the hypothetical and confirms that this is what's going on.

SAMMY

She's requesting "special". I don't
know how to deliver.

Christian takes in lungfuls of air as he works out to give Sammy some older-brotherly advice, really not wanting to have this conversation.

CHRISTIAN

Okay. Advice? It's not special when
it's rushed. Or if both people
aren't on the same page. If it
feels wrong then it probably is.

Sammy brushes this off.

15

CONTINUED:

15

SAMMY

Great. I'm more thinking logistics -
music, location. What are your
thoughts on manscaping?

Christian can't believe he's being asked this.

CHRISTIAN

If you borrow my razor you're a
dead man.

Christian turns and breaks back into a run. Sammy processes
this for a moment before straggling after him.

16

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 3

16

KAT, TIM, N/S STUDENTS

Tim has been rehearsing in the studio and now wipes the sweat
off his face. Kat flies in, still carrying the shopping bag.

KAT

Timmy, my friend, tell me you don't
already have a date for tomorrow
night?

TIM

Not going. I've got an interview
with the Company to worry about.

He smiles, incredibly excited. Kat's heart sinks, feeling bad
he has his hopes up.

KAT

Really? I thought you got an early
offer from New Zealand Ballet?

TIM

Yeah but the National's the dream.
Do you think I should call NZ and
knock them back?

KAT

(quickly)

No I wouldn't. I mean, you should
keep your options open... You don't
know what they might have already
decided.

Tim has clocked the strange expression on Kat's face.

TIM

They wouldn't interview me if they
weren't serious.

Kat nods, torn, but she can't let him make a massive mistake
like this.

KAT

Right... Unless they need to be seen to follow a process or whatever...

Tim finally gets it.

TIM

Unbelievable.

KAT

Tim...

Kat feels dreadful. He's gutted.

TIM

Someone needs to tell your brother that we've all worked hard. We just don't all have your family connections.

Tim grabs his bag and leaves the studio.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DUSK 3

TARA, ETHAN

Tara is hanging fairy lights, getting the roof-top ready for the formal. All her attention is focused on the task at hand when Ethan enters, obviously furious.

ETHAN

Is my sister here? The one with whom I share blood?

TARA

I think she's giving in to FOMO. Why?

ETHAN

She's just told the world I've been offered a contract with the Company.

Tara is genuinely happy for him.

TARA

You have? That's amazing. Congratulations.

ETHAN

Yes. Except it's because of Damien Lang and it's only just been confirmed that he's out permanently. So it's really bad timing.

Through this we've stayed with Tara who has only heard the part about Damo. Her face has turned white.

TARA

Damo's not going to dance again?

Ethan realises this was not the best thing to say to Tara. He forgets his own problem for a moment.

ETHAN

No. But every injury is different.
You shouldn't... (*read too much
into it*)

TARA

Yeah, of course. Absolutely.

Tara has turned away, back to her decorations. Ethan watches as she fiddles with the lights, trying to get them straight.

ETHAN

What are you doing Tara? I thought
you were someone who'd do anything
to get back to dancing.

TARA

What makes you think I'm not?

Ethan looks around at the formal decorations - it's not rocket science. Tara concedes his point. When she speaks again she's finally being truthful.

TARA

You know, before, getting injured
was my worst nightmare.

ETHAN

It's normal to be scared.

Tara almost laughs - he so doesn't get it. She's finally honest with someone about what's going on.

TARA

That's the thing. Now it's happened
it's a relief.

Tara tries to keep her voice matter-of-fact as she explains.

TARA

I go through days where no one
yells at me. Where I'm not trying
as hard as I can and never being
good enough.

She looks at Ethan, challenging him to say he doesn't understand.

TARA

I'm having fun. And, you're not
meant to say it, but I like being
injured. I like having a...

17

CONTINUED:

17

ETHAN
Boyfriend?

TARA
Life. I like not dancing.

It's only here that we see some cracks in her bravado. It's like she's cheating on herself, yet it's true.

ETHAN
You wouldn't feel that way if it was forever.

TARA
How do you know?

Because Tara doesn't. Ethan just looks at her - simple.

ETHAN
I know you.

18

EXT. SYDNEY - DAY 4
NIL CAST

18

The sun rises over Sydney. Birds fly over water that's as still as glass.

19

EXT. ACADEMY/CAFE - DAY 4
KAT, SAMMY, ABIGAIL, SEAN, N/S STUDENTS

19

Sammy and Abigail are having breakfast together in the cafe. The vibe is awkward now the big day is upon them. Neither can think of anything to say and just smile politely at each other over their muesli.

CROSS TO:

The other side of the cafeteria where Kat has just put every shred of dignity aside and asked Sean to the formal.

SEAN
I would but...

KAT
(livid)
No. You have stalked me for months. It is illegal to refuse.

SEAN
(squirming)
I'm kind of seeing someone.

Kat stares at him. Seriously?

KAT
Go. Shoo.

Sean flees in terror. Kat whirls around and slumps down beside Sammy. Abigail takes the opportunity to escape.

ABIGAIL

I'm going to get to class.

KAT

I've asked nine boys, Sammy. Nine.

She starts to pick at Abigail's breakfast.

SAMMY

You left it too long. You were at the top of most guy's lists.

KAT

And yet none of them asked me.

Kat spits the fat free muesli back into the bowl.

KAT

Your girlfriend seriously eats this stuff?

SAMMY

Do you have an opinion on mood candles? Romantic or fire hazard?

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 4

ETHAN, CHRISTIAN, TARA, TIM, N/S THIRD YEAR BOY

Dressed in warm up gear, Tim and another THIRD YEAR BOY are filing out of the studio. They've obviously been talking about Ethan and shoot him a dirty look as they pass.

Ethan grits his teeth, unused to being an outcast and not liking it at all. Christian enters, dressed for contemporary class. He nods at Ethan as he passes.

CHRISTIAN

Hey.

Ethan debates whether to bring up the chat he had with Tara the night before. Concern wins out and he turns around.

ETHAN

Hey. How's Tara?

Christian begins to warm up, tight-lipped.

CHRISTIAN

Yeah. She's fine.

ETHAN

It's just, we were talking last night. She seemed pretty upset...

Christian thinks he's being baited and refuses to bite.

CHRISTIAN

Must just be you. She's good with me.

ETHAN

Right. So don't bother going any deeper then.

Ethan shakes his head in disbelief.

ETHAN

Have you even asked why she hasn't got her plaster off yet?

He's hit a nerve but Christian only shows it for a split-second.

CHRISTIAN

Hard still hanging around for scraps?

Ethan gives up on trying to help.

ETHAN

Mate, your girlfriend went to me when she needed someone to talk to. Not sure what you mean by scraps.

Ethan walks out, passing Tara on her way in. She locks eyes with Ethan - for just a flicker, we see her vulnerability. But then she plasters on a smile and approaches Christian.

TARA

Excuse me. What do you think you're doing?

CHRISTIAN

Warming up.

TARA

Incorrect. You're wagging with me.

Christian looks at Tara - this again.

CHRISTIAN

I can't. I have to keep up attendance.

Tara nods, not liking the idea of being by herself. Christian sees another flicker of vulnerability as she walks out of the studio. Does Ethan know what he's talking about?

CHRISTIAN

Hey. You okay?

Tara smiles again.

TARA

Couldn't be better.

21

INT. ACADEMY/CORRIDOR - DAY 4

21

TARA, DAMIEN

Classes are underway throughout the building and Tara isn't a part of any of them. She can hear strains of classical music echoing out of the studios and puts her headphones on to shut them out. As she rounds the corner she sees...

Damien, also on crutches, moving in her direction. This is the last person Tara wants to see right now. She moves to double back but he's already seen her. There's no place to hide in the empty corridor.

DAMIEN

Webster. Think there's something in the country water that's bad for knees?

Tara forces a smile as Damien hops over.

TARA

Maybe.

DAMIEN

Guess you've heard my news?

About his leg. Tara doesn't want to get into it.

TARA

No. Only... rumours.

DAMIEN

Well they're probably true. Ligaments are shot so...

The damage is permanent. Tara's face has turned ashen. Damien smiles to reassure her.

DAMIEN

It's okay, I'm going to help dad out on the property. He needs it.

He smiles bravely and Tara nods, trying to see the bright side with him.

DAMIEN

And I'm actually looking forward to getting out of the city. Can't believe it's been ten years since I came here.

TARA

Really?

DAMIEN

Eighteen since I first set foot in a ballet studio. You know, it's probably time to do something else...

21 CONTINUED: 21

All of sudden, Damien bursts into tears. Tara watches shocked as this grown up man cries before her, devastated about what he's just lost. Tara stares - in that instant realising what it would be like not to dance again.

22 INT. ACADEMY/DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY 4 22
TARA, DR WICKS

Tara is sitting on the examination bed. Dr Wicks stands above her, holding a tiny saw.

DR WICKS

Ready?

Tara takes a deep breath and nods. The saw comes closer, whizzing around and around as it slices off her cast.

In SLOW MOTION white bits of plaster fall through the air. Tara watches them in wonder... They look like snow...

23 INT. BOARDING HOUSE/SAMMY'S ROOM - DAY 4 23
SAMMY, CHRISTIAN

INTERCUT WITH:

24 INT. BOARDING HOUSE/TARA'S ROOM/CORRIDOR - DAY 4 24
TARA, ABIGAIL

BOYS' ROOM: Sammy and Christian are getting ready for the formal. Sammy pulls two suits out of his wardrobe and passes one of them to Christian to borrow.

CUT TO:

GIRLS' ROOM: Abigail and Tara are both crowded in front of the mirror, wearing pyjamas as they do their make-up. Abigail is expertly applying individual false eyelashes. Beside her, Tara is staring in horror at the spot that has just appeared on her chin. Before she can completely freak out, Abigail wordlessly hands her some concealer.

CUT TO:

BOYS' ROOM: Christian struggles to do up the tie Sammy has loaned him. Sammy is trying to straighten his hair with a straightening iron. He jumps as he accidentally burns his forehead.

CUT TO:

GIRLS' ROOM: Tara zips Abigail's dress up. They both spray perfume into the air and step through the mist.

CUT TO:

BOYS' ROOM: Sammy looks down at his pillow where Christian has left a condom as a silent reminder. Sammy hurriedly shoves it in his pocket.

CUT TO:

GIRLS' ROOM: Tara's hair and make-up are now fully done. Her dress is laid out on her bed and she's about to change into it when she hears a knock at the door. Tara opens it and is surprised, to say the least, to see Miss Raine.

MISS RAINE

May I come in?

TARA

I was just... *(getting ready to head out)*. Sure.

Tara lets Miss Raine through. It's weird to say the least having her in the bedroom.

MISS RAINE

I saw Doctor Wicks. Initial ultrasound results seem positive.

TARA

I know. The bone's in alignment. I'm lucky.

Tara really appreciates just how lucky. But Miss Raine doesn't share her smile, she studies her student intently.

MISS RAINE

How hard you work in rehab will be critical in terms of ongoing damage. I wish I could believe you were up to it.

Tara knows she has to accept some of this blame.

TARA

Miss Raine, I admit the last few weeks my focus has wandered but...

MISS RAINE

It's the whole year, Tara.

TARA

That's not fair. I've worked.

MISS RAINE

When it suited you. The wasteful part is you have potential...

Tara's heard it all before.

TARA

But I'm untrained and... *(have a long way to catch up)*

MISS RAINÉ

More potential than you know.

This grabs Tara. She's never heard it so plainly before.
Could it really be true?

MISS RAINÉ

Unfortunately, it's not enough to
carry you through this. You can't
keep putting off the decision - are
you going to commit 100% to
becoming the dancer you are
supposed to be? Or are you going to
continue to throw it away for this?

She gestures to Tara's dress, laid out on the bed. Tara
pretends not to understand.

TARA

(softly)

It's just a formal.

MISS RAINÉ

No it's not. And as much as you may
wish to have everything, it's just
not possible.

Abigail re-enters the bedroom.

ABIGAIL

What can take a person so...
(long?)

Abigail stops as she sees Miss Raine.

ABIGAIL

Hi Miss Raine.

With one last look at Tara, Miss Raine leaves the room and
Tara with a lot to think about.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE/STAIRS - DAY 4

TARA, ABIGAIL, CHRISTIAN, SAMMY

Sammy and Christian are waiting down the bottom of the
stairs. Christian notices that Sammy is trying to
surreptitiously scratch his own groin.

SAMMY

Manscaped. No one told me how
itchy... (it could be)

Christian elbows Sammy to stop it. The boys turn their
attention to the top of the stairs where the girls have just
appeared. The world slows down...

Abigail is first down the stairs and so beautiful that Sammy
forgets all about scratching.

Then Tara appears wearing what truly is her dream dress - astonishingly similar to the one she was drawing in class. The effect is only slightly marred because she has to use crutches to get down the stairs.

SAMMY
(to Abigail)
Hi.

He can't wipe the grin off his face. This beautiful and his?

ABIGAIL
Stop looking like that.

Christian takes Tara's hand as she hops down the last step. She smiles, trying to take her mind off Miss Raine's words.

CHRISTIAN
What if I said I had a surprise for you?

TARA
I'd say - me first.

Tara lifts up her dress and Christian sees that the plaster has been removed.

CHRISTIAN
You got your cast off?

TARA
Yeah. It was actually long overdue.
Boring story.

Tara doesn't notice that Christian is studying her, remembering Ethan's words and not liking that there's some truth to them. They start heading out all together.

EXT. ROOFTOP - SUNSET 4

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

They have arrived at the formal and Tara looks around, satisfied by her efforts. The decorations are beautiful. Fairy lights twinkle above their heads. The walls have been dusted with flecks of white and silver. It is a Winter Wonderland dream.

SAMMY
To the dance floor Cinderella?

ABIGAIL
This dress does not give you
license to be cheesy.

As they head out, bickering happily, Tara feels a tap on her shoulder. She spins around and is excited to see Kat. The girls hug.

KAT

So I had to scrape the bottom of the barrel but I found myself a date.

Tara looks over Kat's shoulder to where Ethan is standing.

KAT

(grins mischievously)
He couldn't get one either.

ETHAN

You look good out of plaster.

Tara smiles a silent thanks as he kisses her on the cheek. Ethan and Kat walk away.

Christian is standing beside Tara, jaw clenched. Tara doesn't notice anything's wrong as she laces her fingers through his.

TARA

You don't mind if we stand here for a bit? My knee's not up to anything too fast.

CHRISTIAN

You know that's the first time you've brought it up?

TARA

My knee? No it's not.

CHRISTIAN

I meant with me.

Christian fidgets with the tie, already feeling like it's choking him. The two of them stand watching the dancing, not talking, both deep in thought.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT 4

TARA, CHRISTIAN, ABIGAIL, SAMMY, KAT, ETHAN, TIM, SEAN, N/S SEAN'S PARTNER, N/S STUDENTS

The sun has now completely set and the lights of the buildings sparkle all around them.

The Academy students have filled the dance-floor. Sammy and Abigail are dancing up a storm. People step aside as they reenact one of the lifts from the Cinderella pas de deux. Sammy twirls Abigail around and around.

CROSS TO:

Kat and Ethan hovering by the punch bowl. A group of third years are mingling nearby - Tim and his friends still obviously bitching about Ethan getting the contract.

Kat winces in sympathy as Ethan passes her a drink.

KAT

It wasn't intentional. My mouth just opens and...

ETHAN

You know what, I'm out of this place. I don't really care what they think.

He flashes Kat his trademark cocky grin. It makes her laugh.

KAT

I was hoping that being a social leper might be good for that ego of yours. Give it a nice healthy tarnish.

Kat feels a tap on her shoulder and turns around. It's Sean.

SEAN

Can I have this dance?

Ethan steps aside and Kat reluctantly moves onto the dance floor and starts to dance with Sean.

KAT

Thought you had a date.

SEAN

(swallows nervously)

I do. He's over there.

Sean points out a nice-looking, slightly gawky guy, SEAN'S DATE, who waves at her. Sean turns back to Kat, anxiously awaiting her reaction. After the shock settles, Kat grins at him in new-found appreciation.

KAT

Wow. Good for you.

He smiles back and then leans in to whisper the next bit.

SEAN

Doesn't matter who I go out with, you'll always be number one.

KAT

(laughs)

Thanks Sean. That means a lot.

28 INT. BOARDING HOUSE/SAMMY'S ROOM - NIGHT 4
SAMMY, ABIGAIL

28

INTERCUT WITH:

29 EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT 4
TARA, CHRISTIAN, KAT, ETHAN, TIM, SEAN, N/S SEAN'S PARTNER,
N/S STUDENTS

29

SAMMY'S ROOM: Sammy's heart is in his mouth as he opens the door to his room. Abigail follows behind him, also nervous.

The room is the cleanest we've ever seen it. There's a small bunch of flowers in a vase and Sammy now fiddles with a row of tealight candles, trying to get the matches to work.

SAMMY

Sorry. I got fixated on music and then went down this creepy rose petal path before I realised - trying too hard.

Abigail has to stifle a laugh as he burns his finger attempting to light the last tealight.

SAMMY

It's probably not what you meant by special. We should raincheck.

Abigail is touched by his efforts.

ABIGAIL

No. It's perfect.

Some of Sammy's nerves slip away as they lean in to kiss.

SAMMY

What made you change your mind?

Abigail searches for the most truthful answer.

ABIGAIL

I get these glimpses where I want to be about more than just dancing. Why did you?

As Sammy looks at her, he realises he doesn't have an answer. He kisses her instead.

CUT TO:

ROOFTOP PARTY: Kat and Ethan have been dancing in a group with Sean and his date. As the music changes to a slow song, they start hamming it up, mocking the overly romantic music. Kat is actually having fun at the formal she was dreading.

CROSS TO:

Christian who by comparison is not having any fun; he's brooding, withdrawn. Tara leans her crutches against a chair.

TARA

I'm going to remember this night forever. I can't believe you got me a surprise as well.

She takes Christian's hand and starts limping out onto the dance-floor.

CHRISTIAN

Are you sure you should be...
(*doing this?*)

TARA

(smiles)
Of course. It can handle one dance.

Christian shrugs, getting colder by the moment.

CHRISTIAN

I didn't know. But then I'm not - what is it - sensitive or smart enough - to be told the details?

Tara stares at him, surprised.

TARA

I don't get why you're so caught up on this.

Christian can see that Ethan is watching them.

CHRISTIAN

You spoke to him right, about your knee? Had a little heart to heart?

Tara can't deny it.

TARA

Yes. But you don't need to be jealous. He just... he gets it.

Christian's jaw clenches. He hasn't raised his voice but it's becoming apparent that he's spoiling for a fight.

CHRISTIAN

Gets what?

TARA

That side of me. The dancing side.

CHRISTIAN

And I don't?

TARA

No. You're the other... I don't know to explain it properly but...

CHRISTIAN

That's okay. It's pretty clear. He knows you, I don't.

Not making eye contact, they continue to sway together in the dream formal that Tara has created. Dread setting in.

TARA (V.O.)

*There are lessons in fairytales.
Even wearing the perfect dress,
Cinderella discovered that a
perfect night can't last forever.*

CUT TO:

SAMMY'S ROOM: Sammy and Abigail are sitting on his bed, kissing. Abigail's eyes are closed but Sammy is looking around his room, feeling increasingly uncomfortable about what they're about to do.

TARA (V.O.)

*When midnight came, the fantasy
ended.*

Sammy finally musters up his courage and pulls away.

SAMMY

I um... Can we stop for a second?

CUT TO:

ROOFTOP PARTY: Tara and Christian are still on the dance-floor but have stopped moving. Their argument is fast spiralling into a fight.

TARA (V.O.)

*And real life switched on the
lights.*

CHRISTIAN

Bet he was real sensitive. I mean you cheated on him so why wouldn't you cheat on me?

Tara is now angry as well. She lashes out.

TARA

You know what - you don't have a right to know about my knee or my dancing. If you hadn't made me stay at the beach then we wouldn't have been rushing. This wouldn't have happened.

They look at each other, neither able to take back what they've said. Both hurting.

CHRISTIAN

That's what you think?

CUT TO:

SAMMY'S ROOM: Abigail can't look at Sammy, totally humiliated. He feels terrible.

SAMMY

It doesn't feel right. And it should. You deserve that.

ABIGAIL

No, that's... Good decision.

CUT TO:

ROOFTOP PARTY: Tara shakes her head - she doesn't know what she thinks. Miss Raine's words are churning through her head.

TARA

I don't know what I think. Except everyone keeps telling me I'm wasting time. That I have to choose.

CHRISTIAN

I'll make it easy for you.

Christian walks away from Tara, leaving her by herself on the dance-floor, without crutches or a lifeboat. At that moment, tiny paper snowflakes begin to fall on her from overhead.

Kat rushes over to Tara with a big smile.

KAT

You made it snow.

Tara shakes her head. She looks over to the door, just as Christian disappears removing his tie.

TARA

Christian did. As a surprise.

Kat looks at her friend's face. Tara is reeling from everything that's just happened.

KAT

What's wrong pumpkin?

For a moment, Tara can't speak.

TARA

I think rehab's going to hurt.

The girls stand together on the dance-floor, snow still falling.

END OF EPISODE