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Dance Academy

SERIES ONE

EPISODE 4
BLOCK 1

"Minefield"

Written by David Ogilvy

Producer: Joanna Werner
Created by: Samantha Strauss
Story Editor: Liz Doran
Script Editor: Greg Waters

RELEASE SCRIPT
05/06/09

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1 **EXT. ACADEMY/WHARFSIDE - DAY 5** 1

NIL CAST, MISS RAINÉ (O.S.)

Establisher. A beautiful Sydney morning. The sun dancing on the harbour. The school starting to come to life. Simple piano music kicking in as dance practice begins.

MISS RAINÉ (O.S.)

All right girls, double battement frappe and two and three and four.

2 **INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 5** 2

TARA, KAT, ABIGAIL, MISS RAINÉ, N/S FIRST YEAR STUDENTS (FEMALE), TARA (V.O)

Girls classical ballet class.

A stern faced, immaculately coiffed Miss Rainé makes her way along the barre where Tara, Kat, Abigail and the other girls are going through their exercises.

MISS RAINÉ

Accent out! Out! Quick petit battement... Lower leg only. And releve up. Balance. Ribs in Tara.

As Miss Rainé moves along the line of girls, we stay on Tara. Her voice-over takes over as she continues her exercises.

TARA (V.O.)

Everyone thinks a farm is a dangerous place. But not to me. I know every rabbit hole, broken fence and rusty nail. No matter where I am, I'm safe.

LATER:

Tara and the dancers doing petit allegro exercises in the centre of the studio. Miss Rainé moves around Tara and the dancers, watching their every move.

TARA (V.O.)

But the Academy is a whole other planet. One minute you think you know your way around. The next...

MISS RAINÉ

Tara - plie!

Abigail, technically perfect, smirks at Tara's mistake.

But Tara continues, determined.

2 CONTINUED:

2

TARA (V.O.)
*... you realise you're in a
minefield.*

3 **INT. ACADEMY/CORRIDOR - DAY 5**

3

TARA, ABIGAIL, SAMMY, SEAN, CHRISTIAN, ETHAN, N/S STUDENTS
(MALE AND FEMALE), N/S THIRD YEARS, TARA (V.O)

STUDENTS are variously collecting belongings from lockers, or heading off to their next class. There's a real buzz in the air as they whisper behind cupped hands and snigger directly at camera (Tara) as it tracks down the corridor towards them.

TARA (V.O.)
*Everywhere I look there's a new
trap, another enemy...*

Abigail smiles smugly at camera (Tara), her mission accomplished.

Tara continues down the corridor, running the gauntlet, as it were, doing her best to ignore the taunts and whispers. As she passes Sean, he quotes from a print out of Tara's pros and cons list, sending Tara up.

SEAN
"and he smells like Christmas..."

Tara: Drop dead.

TARA (V.O.)
... danger around every corner.

Tara continues on her way, enduring the agony. But then, just when she thinks she's through the worst of it, turning into the other end of the corridor is...

Ethan! Gorgeous Ethan. In slow motion to make Tara's predicament seem even worse.

Tara slows, mortified. Ethan is heading straight towards her in conversation with a couple of other dancers, laughing, smiling, not a care. He hasn't seen her - yet. Could hell get any more hellish? Sean makes sure of it.

SEAN
*"The way he eats, the way he talks
about things... real things..."*

Tara can do nothing but force a smile and bear her agony. As Ethan draws closer and closer. He is bound to look up and see her...

3

CONTINUED:

3

TARA (V.O.)

And just when you think it's game over, the universe gives you a bonus life.

Sammy suddenly appears from a doorway and hauls Tara to safety as Ethan moves past. Saved in the nick of time.

4

EXT. ACADEMY/WHARFSIDE - DAY 5

4

TARA, SAMMY, KAT

Sammy and Tara hurry out of the building, Tara exasperated by the crazy things that have been happening to her.

TARA

First everyone thinks I got my gear off in the boys change rooms, and now this stupid list. Can it get any worse?

SAMMY

Since you ask...

He winces apologetically as he points Tara towards Kat, who is sitting by the edge of the wharf full of attitude. She holds up a copy of Tara's dreaded list.

KAT

At least I'm not the first negative on your list. I suppose I should be thankful.

TARA

I'm really, truly sorry Kat. I didn't mean to drag you into my mess.

KAT

And yet here I am. Just some sort of obstacle in your way to Ethan.

SAMMY

That is so not true.

Kat glares at him - shut up! Tara gestures to Sammy - you'd be safer off staying out of this.

TARA

Kat, trust me, I'm trying to find every possible reason not to feel this way.

Kat sees her pain, softens a little.

4

CONTINUED:

4

KAT

Here's a great reason. My brother will break your heart and when he does, I'm not going to supply the tissues.

TARA

I promise I'm avoiding him.

Kat takes this in. Accepts that Tara is genuine. But still isn't happy about the situation.

TARA

You think Abigail sent it to third years?

Kat gives her a look.

KAT

He read it.

TARA

Just kill me now.

5

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 5

5

TARA, KAT, SAMMY, CHRISTIAN, ABIGAIL, SEAN, ETHAN, PATRICK, ISABELLE, N/S FIRST YEAR STUDENTS (MALE AND FEMALE)

Pas de deux class, warm-up.

Abigail is all confidence and smiles as she prepares for class and chats with other girls. The girls are wearing half tutus and putting on pointe shoes. As Tara (not en pointe), Sammy and Kat warm up, they look across at Abigail.

SAMMY

What are you going to do?

Tara smiles warmly at Abigail.

KAT

Good plan. Torture her with niceness.

Unnerved, Abigail forces a smile back as Patrick enters dressed in shorts, singlet and a baseball cap. He's high energy, fun, enthusiastic without being over the top. The key to Patrick is that he loves to teach.

PATRICK

Right, pop quiz, who can tell me the real meaning of pas de deux?

Abigail shoots her hand up. That's so easy!

ABIGAIL

Pas de deux. It means dance of two.

PATRICK

That's its literal translation, but what does it really mean? Beneath the French words? Metaphorically?

Tara and Sammy look at Abigail. See her overt confidence crumble, panicking on the inside. She hasn't got a clue!

PATRICK

Pas de deux: two bodies, one soul. A guy and a girl dancing together to produce one pure emotion. That's what today's class is all about.

A buzz of anticipation as Patrick turns to collect something from his bag. Tara whispers to Kat, worried.

TARA

I've never danced with a boy before.

Kat looks at her, surprised.

TARA

It's true. Back home girls danced with girls. There were no boys.

KAT

Don't worry, first years are just sweaty creatures that trample on your toes a lot.

Seeing Sean adjusting his dance belt beneath his pants.

KAT

And adjust their dance belts way too much.

Sean catches her looking at him, smiles. Kat rolls her eyes. As if she's interested?! Patrick resumes, a cloth over his shoulder, and holding up an egg --

PATRICK

There are three important ingredients in pas de deux.

He tosses the egg to ... Christian. Who catches it easily, one handed. The class buzzes. Christian looks at Patrick, defiant. Patrick nods, pass it on. Christian tosses the egg to Kat, who tosses it to Sammy, etc. During this...

PATRICK

Trust.
(egg throw)
(MORE)

5

CONTINUED:

5

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Unity.

(egg throw)

And...

Abigail throws the egg towards Tara...slo-mo as...Tara sees Ethan enter the studio with Isabelle. Distracted, she drops the egg. Splat.

PATRICK

Communication.

Abigail looks at Tara, a victory smile.

PATRICK

Without them... well... (you can see the result.)

Patrick wipes up the egg with one sweep of his cloth.

PATRICK

So, our star pas de deux couple from third year have agreed to help out today. Ethan and Isabelle, good of you to join us.

Ethan and Isabelle are stripping down to dance gear. A look from Ethan, he's not thrilled to be here.

PATRICK

Now, let's divide you into pairs.

CUT TO:

Later. Tara and Christian are doing a simple promenade. The look on Tara's face says it all. Could she have been partnered with anyone worse?

Patrick watching all the couples doing their exercises.

PATRICK

Remember to find unity, you need trust and communication.

Abigail and Sammy are working together. Not happy campers.

ABIGAIL

Is your hand always this clammy?

SAMMY

I'm allergic. (To you.)

Kat and Sean are partnered. Sean couldn't be happier. He slides his hand slightly low on Kat's hip, or some such mildly inappropriate place. Kat fixes him with a hard look.

KAT

You want that in plaster?

5

CONTINUED:

5

Sean moves his hand to the correct position.

Tara and Christian continue to work in icy silence, avoiding eye contact. Tara acutely aware of Ethan as he moves amongst the dancers offering tuition.

PATRICK

Focus on who you're dancing with.
No one else should matter.

Ethan draws closer and closer until...he notes Christian making an incorrect move.

ETHAN

(Do you) Mind?

Christian steps aside as Ethan takes his place as Tara's partner. Tara's heart almost misses a beat. Ethan's feeling awkward too, but he's a professional. He gets on with it.

Across the room, Isabelle glares at Tara as Ethan leads her in a simple, improvised pas de deux. Sees Tara accidentally step on Ethan's toes. Back to Tara apologising to Ethan.

ETHAN

Relax. You're doing fine.

Tara looks at Ethan, searching for hidden meaning behind his reassurance. Ethan lifts her high, and again. Simple moves, but impressive nonetheless. Tara is totally under Ethan's influence, soaring high, enjoying every moment.

6

INT. DANCE ACADEMY/STUDIO/CORRIDOR - DAY 5

6

TARA, KAT, SAMMY, SEAN, ABIGAIL, CHRISTIAN, PATRICK, N/S
FIRST YEAR STUDENTS (MALE AND FEMALE)

The dancers pile out of the studio. Class is over, or so they think. Tara, Sammy and Kat together, Tara exhilarated after her pas de deux with Ethan.

TARA

(excited)
What a great class.

Seeing Kat's glare. Pulls back.

TARA

I just meant Patrick's such a...
great teacher.

Kat walks ahead. Tara leans in to Sammy.

TARA

(Sotto)
Do you think it's a sign the
universe is throwing us together?

Sammy's look says it all: deluding yourself again.

Patrick calls from the door, moving into the corridor, his baseball cap in hand.

PATRICK

Before you break. I've arranged with Miss Raine for you to have the rest of the day off from your regular classes.

There's a buzz of excitement.

PATRICK

Don't get too excited. Instead... you'll be doing an exercise for me. Same partners. One of you choose...

Patrick moves down the corridor inviting students to select a slip of paper from his cap. Kat takes one.

PATRICK

And remember you'll be marked on this exercise exactly as you would any other assessment.

Patrick stops in front of Sammy and Tara. Sammy takes one. Christian walks straight past leaving Tara to choose. She reaches for a slip of paper and checks what's written on it.

KAT (O.S.)

This totally blows!

EXT. ACADEMY CAFE - DAY 5

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

Kat continues, quoting from her slip of paper as she, Sammy and Tara grab some lunch.

KAT

One blindfolded, the other a seeing eye dog.

Kat sees Sean stuffing his face with hamburger, sauce running down his arm, grinning at her as he walks past.

SEAN

Woof.

Revealing his mouth full of hamburger.

KAT

Gross!

SAMMY

Swap you. You can be tied to
Abigail for twenty four hours.

Tara and Kat both sympathise as Sammy screws up the paper.

KAT

Rather stab myself in the eye with
a blunt spoon.

ABIGAIL (O.S.)

It can't possibly be twenty-four
hours, Clammy.

Kat and Sammy turn to see a smug Abigail arrive.

ABIGAIL

Nobody else got that long.

TARA

I did.

Abigail looks back to Tara. She holds up her slip of paper.

TARA

Twenty questions over twenty four
hours.

KAT

What? That's it?

Kat snatches the slip of paper and reads from it.

KAT

Ask anything you like of each
other, but you must answer
truthfully.

TARA

Like I want to know anything about
Christian.

(to Abigail)

So you're not the only one.

On Abigail - she won't question the task now.

Christian pulls on a singlet, grabs his skate board, heads
out the door.

He passes Tara in the corridor. He doesn't wait for her.

8

CONTINUED:

8

CHRISTIAN

Sagittarian. Favourite food: pizza,
and I don't have a lucky number.
Okay, we're done.

Tara follows him down the corridor, protesting.

TARA

No, we're not. This exercise is
important.

CHRISTIAN

I know everything about you. It's
been broadcast around the school.

Christian continues on his way, leaving Tara exasperated.

TARA

Where are you going?

CHRISTIAN

The beach.

Christian heads out with skate board. Tara left behind, but
determined to complete the exercise.

9

EXT. MAROUBRA/BEACH - DAY 5

9

TARA, KAT, SEAN, N/S BEACH GOERS

Tara looks out over the beach. A breeze in her hair, she
takes in the sand and surf. Kat arrives beside her.

TARA

I love this city.

Sean walks beside them, wearing his blindfold.

SEAN

Man, check out that view.

Kat and Tara look at blindfolded Sean. Kat clips him behind
the ear. Idiot. Sean reacts. Ow! Tara moves off.

TARA

I have to find Christian.

Kat points down the beach.

KAT

We'll be down here.
(teasing Sean)
Checking out the babes.

An enthusiastic Sean walks alongside her not knowing that Kat
has chosen a path that will lead him straight into a large
piece of driftwood.

9

CONTINUED:

9

SEAN

Excellent!

He trips over the driftwood and ends up flat on his face.

Kat doesn't bat an eyelid.

KAT

(To Tara)

I'm so going to love this exercise!

10

EXT. MAROUBRA/SKATEBOARD RAMP - DAY 5

10

TARA, CHRISTIAN, N/S SKATERS

Skaters flying around the ramp, doing tricks, fast energetic, raw. Christian is among them, shirt off, knee and elbow pads. He's hot! He shoots back onto the ledge as Tara arrives.

CHRISTIAN

You some sort of stalker?

TARA

Not always. You've got nineteen questions left.

He skates off again, provocative, showing off. Frustrated, Tara moves around the ramp waiting for him to finish his run. Christian takes off whenever Tara's questions get a bit too personal.

Christian drops onto the side of the ramp again, right next to Tara. Tara is trying to get through the exercise.

TARA

Where'd you grow up?

CHRISTIAN

Malabar.

(off her look)

One suburb down.

TARA

By the beach. Lucky.

CHRISTIAN

Houso. Yeah, real lucky.

TARA

Houso?

CHRISTIAN

Housing commission.

(snidely)

Where the poor people live.

Christian's skating again. Tara calls after him.

TARA

You think I'm rich?

CHRISTIAN

You're at the Academy.

TARA

So are you.

Christian skates back onto the edge of the ramp. Face to face with Tara. Tough guy.

CHRISTIAN

Different. And I won't be for long.

TARA

Have you got brothers and sisters?

CHRISTIAN

One brother.

TARA

You close?

Hits a raw nerve. Christian evasive.

CHRISTIAN

He's in Broken Hill.

TARA

I mean emotionally close.

CHRISTIAN

He's flesh and blood, why wouldn't we be close?

Christian skates away again. Tara calls after him, interested now, but changing tack.

TARA

What about your parents? What does your Dad do?

CHRISTIAN

This and that.

TARA

You have to answer.

CHRISTIAN

Says who?

TARA

That's the rules.

10

CONTINUED:

10

CHRISTIAN

Right, the rules. My turn. How far have you gone with a guy?

Tara taken aback. Christian refusing to back down.

CHRISTIAN

The rules. How far?

Tara struggling to answer, embarrassed.

CHRISTIAN

First base, second base? You even have bases your side of town? Ever even kissed a guy?

Tara really blushes. Christian zeroes in on the truth.

CHRISTIAN

You haven't, have you?

Tara's embarrassment turns to anger.

TARA

There's nothing wrong with that.

Christian nods, softens a little. A moment of connection.

CHRISTIAN

You're right. There isn't.

Eye contact. But Christian can't stay nice. He leans closer.

CHRISTIAN

Maybe I can help out.

TARA

Maybe you can get lost!

Tara angrily pushes him away, turns to leave.

CHRISTIAN

Hey. I've still got questions.

But Tara keeps walking. She's angry, distraught. Christian smiles to himself. But there's ambiguity in his victory. He knows he went too far and he isn't proud of it.

11

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 5
ABIGAIL, SAMMY

11

Abigail is stretching over the pilates ball. Sammy is studying. Both of them hampered by the cord that ties them together.

SAMMY

I'm trying to read here.

ABIGAIL

And I'm trying to strengthen my core.

SAMMY

We could be doing this at the beach.

ABIGAIL

I don't do beach.

SAMMY

Do you have an aversion to fresh air?

ABIGAIL

I don't do sand, I don't do salt, and I don't do sun.

She gets up to get some water. Sammy moves in the other direction to get his water bottle. Snap. The cord that connects them snaps taut. Abigail glares at Sammy.

ABIGAIL

I need my water.

SAMMY

So do I.

He relents under Abigail's hard glare.

SAMMY

I'd hate you to die of thirst.

KAT, SEAN, TARA, N/S GIRLS, N/S BEACH GOERS, DOG

Sean is taking a big guzzle from a large bottle of water. He's lying on the sand, shirt off, soaking up the sunshine, keenly listening to Kat as she describes a couple of GIRLS further up the beach.

KAT

There's a couple of okay ones. Nice bods, nice bikinis.

SEAN

Got to be something better than "okay". Come on, you're supposed to be my eyes! So perv like you mean it.

Kat grimaces, getting annoyed. Then she sees something further along the beach. Smiles to herself.

KAT

Actually, there is one. Wow. She's cute.

SEAN

How cute?

KAT

Hot.

Sean is suddenly propping himself up on his elbows.

SEAN

Hot is different to cute. So which is it? Hot or cute?

KAT

Hot. Definitely.

Reveal Kat is looking at a big slobbery Labrador dog, tongue out, panting - hot! The dog looks directly at Kat.

KAT

Uh-oh, she's looking this way.

SEAN

She got a good bod?

KAT

Perfectly proportioned. She is gorgeous.

SEAN

Really?

Sean goes to take off his blindfold. Kat stops him.

KAT

Uh-uh! Remember the exercise.

(sotto)

She's coming over. Don't move.

Sean brimming with nervous expectation. Kat talks to the dog as if she is a person.

KAT

Hi, how are you? This is my friend Sean.

Kat gets the dog to lick Sean on the cheek. Lick. Big reaction from Sean. Euuuw! He jumps up, flings off the blindfold, sees the dog.

12

CONTINUED:

12

SEAN

Argh!

Kat laughs and sprints off. Sean grabs his water bottle, gives chase, squirting her. They almost run into Tara who is returning from the skate ramp. Kat grabs Tara, uses her as a human shield. The conversation fast and overlapping.

KAT

She's just your type.

(sending him up)

Oooh, she's licking her lips.

TARA

What did I do?

SEAN

Your turn with the blindfold.

Squirting Kat with water.

KAT

Okay, okay. I'll do it, I'll do it.

Truce.

13

EXT. MAROUBRA/BEACH - DAY 5

13

TARA, KAT, SEAN, ETHAN, N/S THIRD YEARS (MALE AND FEMALE),
ETHAN'S MATE, N/S BEACH GOERS

Tara walking along the beach, still annoyed with Christian.

TARA

It's not like I'm interested. I'm
only doing this for school.

Kat is now blindfolded. Sean should be leading her along the beach, but he has his phone out and is busy texting rather than watching where they are going.

TARA

I don't care what his favourite
colour is or what his family does.

But Kat is interested, although she doesn't want to show it.

KAT

So...did he tell you anything?

Before Tara can answer, thwack! Kat gets hit with a soccer ball. She whips off the blindfold and turns angrily on Sean.

SEAN

(defensive, pointing)

It was him!

Kat turns and sees Ethan with a group of third years along the beach. Ethan waves an apology. Kat turns on Tara, who has retrieved the ball. She starts quoting her.

KAT

"Oh let's all go to the beach to do the exercise...it'll be so fun."

TARA

I didn't know he'd be here. Honest. Not a clue.

KAT

Yeah, right.

She turns on Ethan.

KAT

How come you're off class?

ETHAN

Perks of being a third year.
(about them being there)
Don't tell me, Patrick's first year "trust, unity and communication" exercise. You're not supposed to just goof off.

KAT

Thanks Nana, we know that.

Sean looks up from his phone and indicates to Kat that she needs to lower the blindfold.

Ethan calls to Tara.

ETHAN

(to Tara)
Hey, the ball.

Tara realises she's still holding the ball. She tries her hardest to kick the ball. The result isn't exactly what she expected.

ETHAN

You guys can play if you want.

Ethan heads back to the game without waiting for a response.

TARA

Um...

She looks to Kat.

KAT

Don't look at me like that Tara.

13

CONTINUED:

13

TARA

How do you...? (know the way I'm looking)

KAT

I might be blindfolded, but I'm not blind.

TARA

Come on. It's just a game of soccer. Please...

Kat sighs, relents.

14

EXT. MAROUBRA/BEACH - DAY 5

14

TARA, KAT, SEAN, ETHAN, N/S THIRD YEAR STUDENTS (MALE AND FEMALE), ETHAN'S MATE, N/S BEACH GOERS

MUSIC OVER as Tara, Kat and Sean join in a high energy game of beach soccer. Tara throws herself into the game. Sean, meantime, does his best to guide blindfolded Kat through the game. As Ethan and Tara jostle over the ball, having fun together.

The game continues. It's fun and even Kat can't help laughing now and again at the ridiculousness of being blindfolded. Even when Sean isn't quick enough and she gets a ball in the head!

KAT

I'm not the goal post, okay!

The game cranks up a notch when Tara starts marking Ethan, guaranteeing lots of physical contact. She steals the ball, runs away with it, and scores.

Ethan's enjoying the game too and it's not long before Tara assumes he's enjoying her company more than the game. Until bang. Another kick. And Kat gets accidentally hit once more. She throws off her blindfold.

KAT

(to Sean)

Okay, the target's leaving. Tara, are you coming?

Kat tears off the blindfold and hands it to Sean. Tara has the ball, dribbling it. The third years calling for it in the background. Tara torn. A glance to Ethan, then back to Kat. Should she go or stay?

ETHAN

Tara, come on. Kick it.

Tara looks at Ethan again, back to Kat.

14

CONTINUED:

14

TARA

Think I'm going to stay.

Kat doesn't buy it.

TARA

(innocent)

I haven't finished the assignment
with Christian.

She kicks the ball to Ethan.

Kat is annoyed with her. But she's not prepared to argue.

KAT

(to Sean)

We're out of here.

Kat heads off, Sean blindfolded by her side, leaving Tara to
resume playing with Ethan and the third years.

15

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 5

15

ABIGAIL, SAMMY

Abigail is doing a set of sit ups. Up down, up down. Her
hands linked behind her head. Up down, up down. Sammy sits on
her legs facing away from her.

SAMMY

At some point in this scenario,
toilets will come into play.

ABIGAIL

You can hold on.

SAMMY

Not for twenty four hours!

But Abigail isn't listening. She cranks up her mp3 player
again.

16

EXT. MAROUBRA/BEACH - DAY 5

16

TARA, ETHAN, THIRD YEAR, N/S THIRD YEAR STUDENTS (MALE AND
FEMALE), ETHAN'S MATE, N/S BEACH GOERS

The soccer game is over. One third year is dribbling the ball
for his own amusement. Tara is on the outer.

ETHAN

I'm starving.

Tara trying to be a part of the conversation.

TARA

Yeah, me too.

16

CONTINUED:

16

But the others don't pay her much attention. The third year tosses the ball to Ethan.

ETHAN'S MATE

Swim then food.

The third years strip down to their swimmers. Tara hasn't brought hers. They dump their clothing and the soccer ball in a pile on the beach. Tara's feeling a little left out and awkward. Then she gets an idea.

TARA

I can go... (and get food)

Nobody listens. They race to the water for a swim.

Tara is left on the beach, watching Ethan and the others hit the surf. Reaching for her bag among their belongings, she scurries up the beach towards the shops.

17

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 5

17

SAMMY, ABIGAIL

Sammy is in agony. Dying to go to the toilet. He looks at his empty water bottle.

SAMMY

Okay, that's it. I'm going to have to go right here.

He unscrews the lid on his water bottle. Abigail looks at him, horrified, as he pretends to prepare to pee into the bottle.

ABIGAIL

You do and you're dead.

18

INT. ACADEMY/BOYS' DRESSING ROOM - DAY 5

18

SAMMY, ABIGAIL, N/S STUDENT (MALE)

Sammy enters, victorious, smiling to himself, with Abigail in tow. He enters the cubicle and closes the door, leaving Abigail standing outside conjoined by their length of cord. A DANCER enters to use the toilet. Abigail turns on him.

ABIGAIL

Closed for fumigation. Find another one.

The dancer looks at Abigail, sees she's deadly serious, and backs out again. Abigail folds her arms, waits for Sammy to finish. Screws up her nose.

18

CONTINUED:

18

ABIGAIL

Why do boys' toilets smell so disgusting?

SAMMY (O.S.)

Why do you have to be so nasty?

ABIGAIL

It's a fact. It stinks.

SAMMY (O.S.)

I meant about Tara's list. Why did you have to broadcast it? I think it was cruel and unnecessary.

ABIGAIL

Less thinking and more doing. Before we both die of asphyxiation.

Screwing up her nose.

SAMMY (O.S.)

I can't go while you're listening. Can you whistle or sing or something?

Abigail rolls her eyes, puts her fingers in her ears, and starts to sing.

19

EXT. MAROUBRA/BEACH - DAY 5

19

TARA, N/S BEACH GOERS

Tara returns with a large container of hot chips. But she can see no sign of Ethan or the other third years.

She walks down to where they left the soccer ball and the rest of their belongings. Gone.

She glances around again. The beach is much emptier now. It's getting later in the day. Looks like Ethan and the others have gone without her!

20

EXT. MAROUBRA/SKATEBOARD RAMP - DAY 5

20

TARA, N/S SKATERS

Tara arrives at the skate board ramp, carrying the chips. But sees no sign of Ethan or the third years. And no sign of Christian either. Just a couple of skaters. Concerned now.

21 **EXT. MAROUBRA/BUS STOP - DAY 5**

21

TARA, REVHEAD, DRIVER

Tara heading back to the bus stop area, still with her chips. As she crosses a pedestrian crossing, a car screeches to a halt, giving her a start.

Tara sees there are two REVHEADS inside. They're about eighteen years old, full of attitude and testosterone. Aggressive doof, doof music plays loudly from the car.

The DRIVER nudges the car forward a couple times, kangaroo hopping it, trying to intimidate Tara. It works. She puts her head down and scurries across to the other side of the road.

As the revheads drive slowly past, the REVHEAD passenger leans out and wolf whistles, laughs, and bangs the side of the vehicle with his hand.

Tara tries to ignore them. The driver accelerates and the car screeches around the corner.

22 **EXT. MAROUBRA/BUS STOP - DAY 5**

22

TARA, PHONE MESSAGE (O.S.)

It's very late in the day and Tara is all alone at the bus stop trying to make sense of the bus routes and the timetable. She checks in her wallet. Only thirty five cents left after buying chips!

Tara retrieves her mobile phone from her bag. But the distant screech of car tyres and echoes of doof doof music catch her attention. And then she hears a service provider message.

PHONE MESSAGE (O.S.)

You do not have enough credit to
make this call, please call 3211 to
recharge...

Annoyed, Tara hangs up. She looks around. No money, no friends, no buses! She bites into a chip. Yuk cold.

23 **INT. BOARDING HOUSE/Common Room - DAY 5**

23

SAMMY, ABIGAIL, KAT, SEAN, N/S STUDENTS

Sammy holds two plates of steaming spaghetti bolognese. Abigail holds two small salads. They sit opposite each other. Sammy tucks into his spaghetti while Abigail picks her way around her tiny salad.

SAMMY

I still don't see what you got out
of spamming the list to everyone.

ABIGAIL

You're like an annoying little insect. Buzzing around.

SAMMY

It just made you look bad. Do you not want people to like you?

ABIGAIL

Buzz, buzz, buzz.

SAMMY

Fine. Won't say another word.

Sammy slides Abigail's spaghetti in front of her.

ABIGAIL

Carbs after three? I may as well eat a deep fried vending machine.

Kat and Sean enter. Sean is still wearing the blindfold. Sammy calls out to Kat.

SAMMY

Where's Tara?

SEAN

Haven't seen her.

EXT. MAROUBRA/BUS STOP/STREET - DAY 5

TARA, CHRISTIAN, DRIVER, REVHEAD

Tara leaves the bus stop. She'll have to walk back to the Academy. She hasn't gone very far when she hears the unmistakable doof doof music of the revheads' car as it draws slowly and menacingly up behind her.

Tara does her best to ignore them as they lean out of their windows and leer at her. Suddenly, the car speeds up, passes her, and stops again about five metres in front of her.

Tara must choose. Keep walking or turn and go back the other way. Tara's not going to give them the satisfaction of running. She keeps walking.

Tara walks past the car. The revehad passenger leans out of his window and hassles Tara as the car gutter crawls alongside her.

REVHEAD

Hey, babe. What you got there?

Tara keeps walking with the chips. Her anxiety increasing.

REVHEAD

Wanna share?

24

CONTINUED:

24

Tara steals a glance at the leering revhead. Which evokes guffaws and whistles from his driver mate.

REVHEAD

Plenty of room on my lap. Come on.

Tara's heart is thumping. Scared, out of her depth. Naive, vulnerable country girl in the not-so-nice city. In a moment of panic and fear she sends some of the chips flying through the open car window and runs.

REVHEAD

No way! You are gone Princess.

Suddenly, Christian is beside her, grabbing her arm and hauling her away.

CHRISTIAN

Run!

Tara runs with Christian, turning towards the beach.

CHRISTIAN

This way.

Leaving the angry driver and revhead torn between saving their upholstery or chasing after Tara and Christian.

25

EXT. MAROUBRA/BEACH - DAY 5
TARA, CHRISTIAN, N/S BEACH GOERS

25

Tara and Christian race along the beach, looking over their shoulders, checking if they're being followed. They slow, sucking in air, catching their breath. Tara looks back to check they're not being followed. No sign of the REVHEADS. She finds a smile for Christian amid the shortness of breath but he's furious. In fact we've never seen him so angry.

CHRISTIAN

Do you have a death wish?

TARA

Didn't you see what they... (*did to me*).

CHRISTIAN

Doesn't matter. You don't pick fights around here.

Tara is silent, chastened.

CHRISTIAN

What are you still hanging around for anyway?

25

CONTINUED:

25

TARA

If you must know I'm waiting for the bus.

CHRISTIAN

No limo today?

Tara gapes. She can't believe this guy.

TARA

When have you seen me in a limo? You know nothing about me.

CHRISTIAN

Way more than I wanna know.

Tara stops in her tracks. She's finally had enough.

TARA

Arrghh. I've never met anyone so rude. Doesn't your mother teach you manners?

Beat, Christian looks to Tara - makes a decision to be honest.

CHRISTIAN

She's dead.

Christian walks off. Tara watches after him, stunned.

26

INT. BOARDING HOUSE/Common Room - Day 5

26

KAT, SEAN, N/S STUDENTS

Kat and Sean are eating bowls of two minute noodles. Sean blindfolded, Kat looking at her phone. She scrolls through the address book until Tara's name shows on the display. She hesitates.

SEAN

Just call her if you're worried.

KAT

Who says I'm worried? I'm just checking messages.

The truth gets to her. She pushes the phone to one side.

KAT

What would you know anyhow?

SEAN

I can see everything. This whole communication thing must be working.

26

CONTINUED:

26

KAT

Yeah? Can you see this?

Kat whacks him on the head with her soup spoon. Hard. Gets up, walks off.

27

EXT. COASTAL HEADLAND - SUNSET 5

27

TARA, CHRISTIAN

Tara and Christian are walking along the coastal headland. Beautiful views out over the sandstone cliffs. While some tension remains, the mood has lightened a little. Tara is reflecting on her own family.

TARA

Can't imagine what it'd be like to lose my Mum.

CHRISTIAN

No. You can't.

They walk on. More silence.

TARA

Did she dance?

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, when she was young.

TARA

Is that why you're at the Academy?

Christian shrugs. Tara waits for an answer.

CHRISTIAN

Promised Mum I'd audition. Doesn't mean I'm hanging around.

TARA

You're going to quit?

CHRISTIAN

I'm not into it.

TARA

I don't believe you.

CHRISTIAN

Suit yourself.

TARA

I've seen you dance.

CHRISTIAN

Fine, you think you know me. True or false? I've got a brother.

TARA

True. He's in Broken Hill.

Christian starts pitching his story.

CHRISTIAN

Very good. And let's say, I got into trouble. Something serious maybe and I needed his help. Would I call him?

TARA

I dunno. Probably. You said you're close.

CHRISTIAN

So you'd expect him to answer, right? Brother helping brother.

He looks his question at her, edgy, challenging her. True or false? Tara fears the answer, doesn't know what to say. Christian shakes his head. Nuh.

CHRISTIAN

Not 'til I called him from a land line. No caller ID to recognise. So he didn't know it was me.

He looks hard at Tara, being deliberately provocative.

CHRISTIAN

Well come on, you know everything. Is this all true or false?

A glint in Christian's eye. Tara's unsettled by his mood. She suspects it's true.

TARA

I'd like to say it's false but...

Christian holds her look, then breaks into a smile.

CHRISTIAN

See. You know nothing. I made it up. My brother and me are as tight as.

He walks on, Tara follows. But Christian's smile is brittle. There's truth in his story and it's painful.

TARA, CHRISTIAN

The sun setting. The street quiet. Tara and Christian continuing their long walk home to the Academy. In silence.

29 EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - NIGHT 5

29

NIL CAST

Establisher. It's late in the evening and most of the lights in the building are off. Just the city lights reflecting on the harbour beyond.

30 INT. BOARDING HOUSE/CORRIDOR - NIGHT 5

30

TARA, CHRISTIAN

Tara and Christian head for their rooms. It's late and the corridor is otherwise deserted. Tara stops outside her door.

TARA

I've got one question left.
Question twenty.

Christian hesitates, moves closer to her. There's definitely a connection.

TARA

Why'd you tell everyone about me in
the boys' change rooms? You knew it
was an accident.

Christian annoyed by her assumption. The connection lost in an instant.

CHRISTIAN

Why would I even bother?

TARA

I can't believe you'd still lie
about it. I know you did.

CHRISTIAN

You don't know anything.

He walks off, then turns back.

CHRISTIAN

I wasn't the only one there. Ever
thought about that?

Christian heads for his room.

31 INT. BOARDING HOUSE/TARA'S ROOM - NIGHT 5

31

TARA, ABIGAIL, SAMMY

Tara sneaks into her room. A small night light on Abigail's desk gives the room a warm cosy glow. Tara heads for her bed. She sees Abigail is already asleep. And beside her, sleeping on a small mattress on the floor, is Sammy - still tied to Abigail. Cute in the warm light.

31 CONTINUED: 31

Tara climbs into bed and stares at the ceiling. She frowns, Christian's question still haunting her.

32 **EXT. ACADEMY/WHARFSIDE - DAY 6** 32
NIL CAST

Establisher. A new day at the Academy. The sun glistening on the harbour behind the school.

33 **INT. ACADEMY/CORRIDOR - DAY 6** 33
TARA, SAMMY, ABIGAIL, N/S STUDENTS

Tara heading down the corridor, determined, annoyed, glances inside the studio, no sign of who she's looking for. Strides on.

Up ahead, Sammy and Abigail are going toe to toe, still conjoined by the cord. Abigail holding up the crumpled slip of paper that Sammy selected for their exercise.

ABIGAIL

It says two to four hours. Two dash four. Not twenty four.

Sammy takes the slip of paper and shows Tara as she passes.

SAMMY

Does that look like two to four or twenty four?

Tara takes a quick glance, winces, sorry Sammy.

TARA

Well there's a two and a four.

And she continues on her way. A vindicated Abigail cuts the cord that connects her to Sammy.

ABIGAIL

You want to know why I am so mean to Tara? Because the three of you are a bunch of idiots.

Abigail pushes through the door into the studio...

34 **EXT. ACADEMY/WHARFSIDE - DAY 6** 34
TARA, ETHAN, KAT, N/S THIRD YEAR STUDENTS

Tara heads to the wharf where she finds Ethan hanging out with his friends.

TARA

I need to talk to you.

Ethan aware of his friends looking away, their knowing smiles. Makes him feel a little uncomfortable.

ETHAN

What's up?

TARA

Like you don't know.

Ethan's friends decide it's time to move on. They leave. Ethan embarrassed although he tries to hide it.

TARA

You've been laughing at me this whole time, haven't you?

Tara has been thinking about this all night but to Ethan it has come out of nowhere and all he can do is laugh.

ETHAN

Excuse me?

TARA

Starting audition week, telling everyone about me in the boys' change rooms. That was you, wasn't it?

Ethan's caught out but puts his famous charm to great effect.

ETHAN

Come on. You have to admit it was a pretty funny story.

TARA

And leaving me at the beach. Super hilarious right?

ETHAN

What? You weren't even with us.

TARA

And not responding to my pros and cons list? That one's the real side splitter.

It's the one that really matters to Tara. But now Ethan's becoming slightly annoyed.

ETHAN

I'm sorry. I didn't realise it required a response.

Tara shakes her head.

TARA

Of course it did. It's not fair...
you can't let a person just hang
there.

(beat)

Because of you the whole school is
laughing at me.

ETHAN

(hard)

How is that because of me?

Tara doesn't have an answer.

ETHAN

Look, if you want the truth I was
embarrassed by it. I've spoken to
you what, three, four times? And
then you go and write that stuff.

(beat)

I mean, come on. What are you
talking about here? I don't even
know you.

Tara doesn't have an answer. She's fighting back the tears.

Kat steps out onto the wharf just in time to see Ethan walk
away from Tara and chase after his third year friends, and
then Tara tears up and run inside.

INT. ACADEMY/GIRLS' DRESSING ROOM - DAY 6

TARA, KAT

Tara in a toilet cubicle, distressed, her face tear streaked,
the floor around her littered with snotty toilet paper.

Kat enters searching for Tara.

KAT

Tara...

No answer. But then a stifled snuffle. Kat looks under the
cubicle doors until she finds a pair of feet. Tara's.

KAT

Tara?

TARA

She can't talk to you.

KAT

Yes she can.

TARA

You said you were sick of girls
coming to you after Ethan...

35

CONTINUED:

35

Tara trying her hardest not to cry anymore.

KAT

Because I hate seeing my friends
get hurt.

Kat grabs a spare roll of paper hand towels from the sink and sits down on the floor, leaning up against the cubicle. Eventually, Tara opens the door and sits down next to her.

Both girls sitting on the bathroom floor, side by side. Tara sniffing, wipes her nose on her sleeve. Kat tears off a piece of hand towel and gives it to her. Tara wipes her nose.

36

INT. ACADEMY/STUDIO - DAY 6

36

TARA, KAT, SAMMY, ABIGAIL, CHRISTIAN, SEAN, PATRICK, N/S
FIRST YEAR STUDENTS (MALE AND FEMALE), TARA (V.O)

Pas de deux class.

MUSIC as Kat and Sean, Abigail and Sammy, and Tara and Christian dance their respective pas de deux.

Patrick watching each and every couple.

PATRICK

Prove to me yesterday's exercise
wasn't a total waste of time.

Christian and Tara dancing. They're coordinating well, communicating physically, performing as one. And making occasional eye contact which is intriguing.

TARA (V.O.)

*Growing up, I had my Mum and Dad to
give me the warning signs. Here we
have to rely on each other.*

Onto Kat and Sean dancing. Doing well. They perform a new turn, Kat just lets Sean guide her.

TARA (V.O.)

*Trust that we won't let one another
down...*

Onto Abigail dancing with Sammy, their movements in perfect unity. Despite herself Abigail is actually enjoying the pas de deux.

TARA (V.O.)

Agree to disagree...

Back on Tara dancing with Christian. Both of them lost in their routine. As simple as it might be, it's exhilarating.

TARA (V.O.)

*And admit that, like it or not, for
the next three years we're tied
together with an unbreakable cord.*

Tara and Christian finishing their pas de deux, interrupted by... Abigail leaping back from under Sammy's foot.

ABIGAIL

Can't believe I let you sleep in my
room.

SAMMY

Like I had a choice!

Kat shoving Sean, who is adjusting his dance belt once more.

KAT

Do that one more time and I'll give
you a life-threatening wedgie.

SEAN

I can't help it. I've got a fungal
rash.

Even Tara and Christian have broken their routine, Christian just looks away, his attention easily drifting to somewhere outside this room. And we pull back on the couples arguing.

As the couples fight and squabble around her, we see Tara on her own in the middle of the dance floor.

TARA (V.O.)

*So maybe we've got a bit of a way
to go yet.*

END OF EPISODE.