

TINY DANCER

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A SCHOOL BELL RINGS, then...

FADE IN:

INT. ST. EDWARD'S MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY - MOVING

Dozens of students (aged 9 to 12) spill out into the hallway. Meet AMY, 9, Black, tense, moving quickly through the crowd.

WE pick up on three older girls following AMY to her locker.

MEGAN

Hold up. Where's the fire?

AMY ignores her, keeps walking.

MEGAN, flanked by cronies LINDA and KIM, catches up.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

You deaf, Puke?

AMY enters her combination, opens the locker, grabs books.

AMY

Got homework.

MEGAN

What?

AMY

You heard me.

AMY slams the locker shut and starts walking away.

LINDA

She ain't gonna finish.

KIM

Can't even read.

MEGAN

That's why Maxine don't like you.

LINDA

No one wants to adopt dumb kids.

AMY turns and faces them.

KIM

Heard she couldn't spell till she was six.

MEGAN

Think it was eight. Same time her
dad OD'd and mommy went crazy.

CRACK! AMY'S hand slashes across MEGAN'S jaw! Knocking her
off balance, falling into KIM, hitting the lockers hard.

LINDA gives chase as AMY bolts out of the doors.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOON'S DONUTS - DAY

As people exit, we meet SABRINA JENSEN, 38, an athletic,
strong, self-sufficient woman, who walks with great
confidence. She's happy on the outside, carrying donuts.

We follow her as she hustles down the street with a slight
limp. EXOTIC BRIGHT SILKS stick out of her gym bag.

EXT. LIFT OFF GYM - MOMENTS LATER

SABRINA arrives outside a DANCE STUDIO and eyes an AERIAL
class in progress -- when all four girls whip past her --

MEGAN and her sidekicks close in quick as --

SABRINA regains her balance and watches AMY cut across the
street for --

EXT. CONDEMNED HOUSE - DAY

The three girls laughing as they chase AMY but... this is not
a game, more like a hunt.

AMY heads for the back corner as the girls approach --

A BUSTED UP CHAIN FENCE

...AMY squeezes through, but the other girls can't.

She rounds a corner, dodges a pair of DRUG ADDICTS and runs
smack into a gate -- SABRINA'S face on the other side.

SABRINA

You alright, honey?

AMY studies her as SABRINA opens the gate.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

Live around here?

AMY takes a step back. SABRINA stops.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
 Okay. Well, I'm starving. Would
 love some company...
 (beat)
 Let's go. Whatever you're running
 from can wait.

CUT TO:

INT. HOWARD'S BURGERS - DAY

A spatula flips a well done burger onto a bun. SABRINA and AMY sit at a corner booth.

SABRINA
 Taste okay?

AMY nods, shoves fries into the side of her mouth.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
 Good. I love this place.

AMY practically inhales her burger.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
 Still didn't get your name. Mine's
 S-A-B-R-I-N-A.

Nothing from AMY. SABRINA pulls the burger tray to the side.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
 You don't want to go home yet, no
 problem. But it's dangerous where
 you were at night. When I finish
 work you need to talk to me.

SABRINA reaches across the table to touch the girl's hand.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
 Sound fair?

AMY
 (beat)
 I'm Amy.
 (and)
 The others call me Puke.

SABRINA
 That must be some story.
 (then)
 They're your sisters?

AMY
 (hesitant)
 Girls I stay with. They say Amy's a
 fake name.

SABRINA
 I say it's a strong name. My
 parents almost named me that!
 (then)
 Fits you better.

AMY almost smiles. Still not convinced.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
 You live in?...

AMY
 Inglewood.

SABRINA
 With your mom?

AMY
 (beat)
 Not no more. Mom needed help. Said
 she'd be back, but I'm with a new
 family now...

SABRINA
 What about your dad?

No reaction.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
 That's okay. Eat up.

INT. LIFT OFF GYM - LATER

SABRINA teaches a children's AERIAL DANCE class. AMY'S off to the side, entranced: her attention on every spin and twist as dancers perform on SILKS.

SABRINA leads them with grace. AMY stares in awe.

As they end, she sees SABRINA trip and rub her hip in pain.

CUT TO:

EXT. WILKIE AVE. - NIGHT

SABRINA and AMY walk through a busy downtown intersection. AMY reaches up and holds SABRINA'S hand.

A moment of silence between them, then:

SABRINA
Next time you'll have to join us.
Sound like a plan?

AMY shrugs her shoulders. SABRINA reaches in her bag and pulls out a shortened AERIAL SILK.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
Hang on to this for me till next
time, okay?

She hands it to AMY. AMY nods, overjoyed with her first gift. SABRINA grips her hand softly.

EXT. HOUSING PROJECTS - NIGHT

They arrive at a rundown duplex. SABRINA rings the doorbell. After waiting for a beat...

SABRINA peeks through the stained glass front door window.

VOICE (O.S.)
What the hell took so long!?

SABRINA turns, sees an obese, messy woman shuffling over.

This is MAXINE, 40's, AMY'S foster-care mother. A fast food worker in a stained apron, grabbing AMY by the neck.

MAXINE
You blind?! Forget what time it is?

AMY'S head hangs low. MAXINE gives SABRINA the once-over:

MAXINE (CONT'D)
You the new counselor at school?
(to AMY)
Bein' bad again, huh?

SABRINA
No it's not...I'm Sabrina Jensen...

SABRINA extends her hand, MAXINE just stares.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
I own a dance studio over on
Crenshaw. Few girls got carried
away chasing her.

MAXINE hunches down, eye-level with AMY, looks her over:

SABRINA (CONT'D)

Was pretty scared when I found her.

MAXINE rises and forcefully grabs AMY'S arm.

MAXINE

She give you any trouble?

SABRINA

No, not at all.

(to AMY)

Remember children's class is every--

MAXINE

Ain't nobody got time for that.

Come on, Puke.

MAXINE drags AMY up the steps, then they disappear inside.

INT. FOSTER HOME - MOMENTS LATER

AMY stands in a mess. Plates piled high. Clothes everywhere. MAXINE paces back and forth, trying to light a cigarette.

MAXINE

I hit the jackpot with you, didn't
I?! Jesus blessed me good!

AMY looks at the ground. MAXINE messes with the lighter --

MAXINE (CONT'D)

I tell you bring your ass home
after school, bring your ass home!

MAXINE throws the broken lighter in frustration, grabs AMY --

MAXINE (CONT'D)

You look at me when I'm talking!

AMY slowly raises her head, barely making eye contact.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

I say do something, you do it!

A slow nod from AMY.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Now pick this shit up.

MAXINE finds some MATCHES. Watches AMY start cleaning.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FOSTER HOME, BEDROOM - NIGHT

A bucket of water is filled on a bed. The washcloth is dunked in the bucket.

KIM, MEGAN, LINDA and three other GIRLS circle around AMY.

They toss a sheet over her, each corner held down by a girl, pinning AMY to the top bunk.

AMY'S eyes shoot open. KIM holds the cloth over AMY'S mouth. The girls take turns WATERBOARDING her -- MEGAN goes last.

She locks eyes with AMY as she struggles to breathe. MEGAN watches her almost drown, the bed soaked. She finally stops.

MEGAN

This never happened.

The other girls run back to their bunks. As AMY cries we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ST. EDWARD'S MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

Flashes of GOAL POSTS as we move over this SOCCER field. Two dozen boys and girls roar past us --

WE DIVE INTO THIS CONTROLLED CHAOS

AMY takes off down field. DRIBBLES in and out of traffic. Kicks a shot, but MEGAN blind-sides her from the right!

She smashes into the ground, scraping her hand. Then --

A miracle: someone reaches for her hand.

This is ANTHONY, 11, Black and Latino, a veteran amongst the other kids. Strong, fearless, more broken in.

She doesn't take it, but uses the moment to quickly rise and chase down the ball. She steals it and kicks it at BRENDA --

CUT TO:

EXT. BASKETBALL COURTS - MOMENTS LATER

AMY and ANTHONY run along the back fence. As they slow down --

ANTHONY

Your hand okay?

AMY
I'll be fine.

ANTHONY
Give it here.

AMY
I said I'm fine.

ANTHONY
Lemme see it, Aim.

AMY finally relents. Raises her arm.

AMY
Still leakin'?

ANTHONY reaches over, touches AMY gently on her hand.

ANTHONY
Nah. You're good.
(then)
Gotta chill next time. Show them
you can take a hit without going
all Mike Tyson.

AMY
I don't gotta do shit.

Always a short temper with this one.

ANTHONY
Come on, Aim. You really want these
losers punking you every day?

AMY kicks the wood-chips as they walk.

AMY
How much longer you think we'll be
stuck here?

ANTHONY
No clue.

AMY
That doesn't scare you?

ANTHONY
Worrying doesn't fix anything. Why?
Maxine wilding out again?

AMY
Is the sky blue?

ANTHONY
 (laughs)
 Things will work out. Always do.

No response from AMY, maybe she gets it, maybe she doesn't.

AMY
 I want to leave.

ANTHONY
 We will. Just a matter of time.

AMY
 No. I mean now.

ANTHONY checks his watch. Still unsure.

ANTHONY
 Which movie? Part 1 or 2?

AMY leans over, whispers into his ear. Off ANTHONY'S smile...

INT. ST. EDWARD'S MIDDLE SCHOOL, A.V. ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

WE HEAR *BACK TO THE FUTURE* playing in the background.

DOC
 (on screen)
 ...roads? Where we're going, we
 don't need roads.

AMY smiles:

ANTHONY
 What is it?

AMY
 Thanks.

ANTHONY
 For what?

AMY
 This...

ANTHONY
 Don't trip. You know I got you.

ANTHONY smiles. The bell rings. Lunch is over.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIFT OFF GYM - DAY

Half-a-dozen girls enter for class. AMY watches them warm up through the window outside.

A WOMAN approaches in the reflection.

SABRINA (O.C.)
It's easier than it looks...

A beat with AMY, focused on the dancers and then...

AMY
What happens if they fall?

SABRINA
They get back up.

SABRINA crosses to the door and holds it open.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
You ready?

AMY raises her eyes to meet SABRINA'S.

INT. LIFT OFF GYM - MOMENTS LATER

AMY stands in class and attempts to mimic the other girls as they finish warming-up.

Her dance outfit is a little big, clearly a hand-me-down. As SABRINA finishes securing the aerial straps...

SABRINA
Very good, girls. Everybody find a partner. Amy, you're with me.

AMY looks at the ceiling and the height of the straps. Small in comparison to the distance to reach the top.

She looks back at the entrance, then over to SABRINA.

The look on SABRINA'S face says: *You staying or quitting?*

AMY grabs the straps, hoists herself up, climbs higher and higher, only to lose her balance...

SABRINA catches her, carefully grabs and untangles her legs. AMY clings on tight, visibly freaked-out.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
Hey, hey, relax. I'm here for you.

Some of the other girls take notice. SABRINA motions for them to get back to rehearsal.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
You ready to go again?

AMY hesitantly nods, wipes sweat from her brow.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
Take it slower this time. It's all about balance.

AMY pulls herself up, struggles to find her footing.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
(laughs)
Stop squirming. You want to float like a butterfly.

SABRINA hoists herself up on her own straps, perfectly balances in mid-air. She unravels, lands back on the ground.

AMY re-focuses, starts to finally balance.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
Much better.

SABRINA places her hand under AMY'S feet, gives her a boost --

SABRINA (CONT'D)
You got this.

AMY climbs nearly thirty feet off the ground.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
Just relax, Amy. *Relax.*

SABRINA gently releases her grip, lets AMY go:

SABRINA (CONT'D)
It's all you now. Just *breathe...*

SABRINA pulls herself up on her silks, so they're eye-level.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
You ready to fly?

AMY
Yeah.

AMY *flies*, smiling ear to ear. For once, a kid.

SABRINA unhooks one of her feet. When she lands, she feels a sharp pain on her ankle. AMY can tell something's wrong.

SABRINA
Okay, you saw me dropping, right?

AMY nods.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
Copy my moves: don't unhook both feet till it feels right. Make sure your hands have a good grip before you glide down.

SABRINA effortlessly unwraps her legs, slides down with both hands till she touches the floor.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
Nice and easy. You got this.

AMY copies SABRINA'S move as she unhooks her feet. She slides down slowly, nearly tumbles, but holds her balance.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
Good. Ready for the next move?

AMY'S eyes shoot to the other girls, from their feet to their hands, to the straps, and then:

AMY
Let's go.

Her eyes meet SABRINA'S.

EXT. HOUSING PROJECTS - LATER

AMY and SABRINA approach the duplex.

SABRINA
So what'd you think?

Nothing but a smile from AMY.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
Yeah, I figured you'd say that.

They reach AMY'S prison. SABRINA knocks. A beat. Then...

MAXINE'S at the door, high as a kite, worse than last time. Nobody says a thing. Then --

MAXINE
Get ya ass over here!

MAXINE grabs AMY by the neck. Pulls her inside.

INT. FOSTER HOME - CONTINUOUS

AMY stands away from MAXINE, as we see what she sees: a broke, unkempt, MAIL MAN, seated on the couch.

He rolls a joint, ignores AMY.

MAXINE
(to man)
Let's hit it.

MAXINE stumbles upstairs, the MAIL MAN right behind her.

CUT TO:

INT. FOSTER HOME - LATER

AMY exits her room, stops a few steps from the kitchen, sees MAXINE passed out on a chair, joint still lit...

CUT TO:

EXT. FOSTER HOME, BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

AMY stares at the silk SABRINA gave her. Twirls it through her hand under the moonlight. As she dances...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - MORNING

DR. BOMBOLA, 70's, esteemed, goes over an M.R.I. with SABRINA.

DR. BOMBOLA
In here we're seeing degenerative changes in your ankle joint, which explains your constant pain and chronic inflammation. In essence, if you don't hang up your silks, you're going to be trading them in for a wheelchair.

SABRINA'S speechless.

DR. BOMBOLA (CONT'D)
You've got to stop, Sabrina.

SABRINA

Twenty-five years following every protocol you "experts" gave me and I still end up with Reactive Arthritis. It's like I turned 90 overnight.

(then)

I'll be fine.

DR. BOMBOLA

Not with painkillers you won't. Your drinking won't help either, stuff just masks the symptoms.

SABRINA

Isn't that what I need, doc?

DR. BOMBOLA

You need to listen to your body. Keep increasing those doses, arthritis will be the least of your problems.

CUT TO:

EXT. SABRINA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

A modern, three bedroom penthouse in the hills.

INT. SABRINA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

SABRINA limps through her clean living room. Posters of her touring days sprinkled throughout. She enters her bathroom.

The front door opens...

ANNETTE (O.S.)

It's hot as hell in here! You decent?

SABRINA

Gimme a sec. How was the shoot?

SABRINA opens the medicine cabinet. Grabs a PILL bottle.

ANNETTE (O.S.)

Walk in the park! There's just something about Malibu. I think I'm in love...

SABRINA
 (under her breath)
 Until you're not...

SABRINA downs the last two pills with vodka.

ANNETTE (O.S.)
 Wait till you see my cover.
 Probably the best I ever looked --

As SABRINA closes the cabinet, WE SEE...

ANNETTE, late 20's, SABRINA'S younger sister, frowning big-time. She shuts off her phone. A long beat.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)
 Thought we talked about this.

SABRINA
 You talked. I listened. Can't get
 into it now. Going to be late.

ANNETTE
 Just not good for you.

SABRINA
 I said drop it, Annette.

ANNETTE
 Till when?

SABRINA brushes past her, enters the...

LIVING ROOM

...packs her dance bag in a hurry.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)
 Dr. told you to quit, again?

SABRINA
 I don't want to fight. You don't
 like how I'm living my life --
 leave your key under the mat.

SABRINA crosses for the door, but ANNETTE blocks her.

ANNETTE
 You have to let go.

SABRINA
 Have you ever helped someone hone
 their talent, Annette?

ANNETTE
Your body needs a break.

SABRINA
No time. Feels good leading.

ANNETTE
You gotta take care of you, first.

SABRINA
I am.

Then ANNETTE steps aside. As SABRINA leaves, **DISSOLVE TO:**

INT. ST. EDWARD'S MIDDLE SCHOOL, A.V. ROOM - DAY

A movie plays in the background. We're in the same place as before. AMY and ANTHONY sit face-to-face in silence.

AMY
When did you find out?

ANTHONY
Met them a couple months back, but
I figured it was all lies.

AMY
Usually is.

ANTHONY
Social services gave them the
runaround for months. Wanted to
wait till it was real before I said
anything.

AMY
(beat)
We'll still have school, yeah?

No response.

AMY (CONT'D)
(realizing)
Oh.

A long beat.

ANTHONY
You mad at me?

AMY
Never. They nice?

ANTHONY

Yeah.

(pauses)

Never had a real family before.

AMY stares at her best friend. Her eyes well up. A curious silence, then...

ANTHONY reaches over and hugs her. As they both cry --

CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE, PHARMACY - NIGHT

SABRINA waits for her medication at the pharmacy.

She notices a familiar face walking down the liquor aisle.

It's a brief moment, but SABRINA and MAXINE'S MAIL MAN meet eyes as he pushes his cart. She grabs her pills and receipt.

Pushes her cart fast now, moving toward the exit.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS

SABRINA emerges and takes a quick left turn only to run smack dab into -- MAXINE, who drops her purse.

MAXINE

Goddammit! Watch where you going --

SABRINA

Let me help you --

SABRINA leans down to help pick up different items and notices a CRACK PIPE next to the cigarettes and hair ties.

MAXINE

Don't need your help.

She snatches the pipe from SABRINA. As they rise --

SABRINA

Some people don't know how to ask.

MAXINE

(cutting her)

Think you so damn special don't ya?

You ain't shit --

MAXINE stumbles, clearly drunk.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
 You think you helping that little
 girl but you ain't. Filling her
 head with all that mess --

SABRINA
 I was just trying to help.

MAXINE
 What you gonna do next? Hmm? You
 gonna take her from me?

SABRINA lowers her eyes, contemplating what that would mean.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
 Think you can raise her?

SABRINA
 Are you going to raise her?

MAXINE
 She ain't special. Got six more
 just like her. And don't give me
 that "you gotta work harder" shit.
 (beat)
 But you adopting her, right?

MAXINE takes a step closer. Looks straight through her soul:

MAXINE (CONT'D)
 You gonna tell her why everybody
 leaves her? Gonna tell her why her
 daddy off'd himself? Or why her
 momma pretends she don't exist?

Nothing from SABRINA, all calmness:

MAXINE (CONT'D)
 Yeah. Like I thought. You all talk.
 (then)
 Now move, bitch.

SABRINA steps to the side. MAXINE stumbles off.

CUT TO:

INT. ST. EDWARD'S MIDDLE SCHOOL - A.V. ROOM - DAY

AMY watches *THE GOONIES*, reads Dance Magazine. She looks over
 at the futon where ANTHONY used to sit.

A small gift-box sticks out from behind the pillow.

AMY leans over, and grabs the box. A tiny note falls out.
It's labeled: "For Amy"

ANTHONY (V.O.)

Aim, no matter where you are, I'll
always be there. - Ant

AMY tears up as she unwraps the box. She finds a heart shaped necklace with the word: *DREAM* ingrained on the back.

AMY immediately puts it on. Holds up the heart to look at it from different angles. A *beat* of our girl at peace, as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - DANCE RECITAL - DAY

A stage full of kids. AMY center stage.

She soars through the air, strikes poses. Incredibly confident, strikingly good.

CAMERA PANS TO the audience. SABRINA springs to her feet clapping proudly.

The little girl locks eyes with the only *mother* she's ever known. AMY flashes a huge smile, ends the routine with an unscripted fall, spins down the SILK HAMMOCK as we...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. DANCE CLASS - EVENING (SEVEN YEARS LATER)

AMY at 16, twirling into a finale, landing gracefully on the stage. A stunning beauty blessed with natural grace.

SABRINA watches from the back, impressed by what she sees...

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

SABRINA on both knees in her pew, deep in prayer during mass. ANNETTE next to her, head bobbing, fights to stay awake.

SABRINA nudges ANNETTE. She opens her eyes.

They laugh.

CUT TO:

INT. FOSTER HOME - NIGHT

MAXINE screams at AMY. Throws trash at her.

MAXINE
That woman ain't your friend! She
ain't your family!

AMY covers her ears. Dodges items. Her face frozen in fear.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
You ain't got no family!

MAXINE pulls her arm back, about to strike AMY, as we--

CUT TO:

INT. SABRINA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

SABRINA limps about in a bath-robe, rubs her ankle. She takes two OXYCODONE with orange juice.

ANNETTE at the table with a stack of legal documents and pen. On closer inspection, WE SEE they're ADOPTION papers.

SABRINA moves to the table but doesn't sit. ANNETTE sips her coffee, gives her a look, goes back to the application.

A beat of them in silence this way, then...

ANNETTE
Everything checks out.

SABRINA
You positive?

ANNETTE
Are you?

SABRINA
(sotto)
Only one way to find out.

ANNETTE
Did Jesus get your voice-mail?

SABRINA
What?

ANNETTE
You left him back to back to back
messages last night. Must of called
you back by now.

SABRINA lowers her head smiling.

SABRINA
(thinking)
He's proud of me for lending a
hand.

ANNETTE
Me too.

ANNETTE rises and kisses SABRINA on the forehead on her way to the kitchen, then...

...a KNOCK at the door, a surprise to them both. ANNETTE returns to the table, carefully collects the paperwork as...

SABRINA heads for...

THE FRONT DOOR

...looks through the peephole, but can't see anyone.

SABRINA
Who is it?

A beat, then...

AMY (O.S.)
The Easter Bunny.

SABRINA looks back at ANNETTE confused, doesn't immediately open the door, but...of course cracks it open and sees...

SABRINA
Aim.

Not a word from her, just a swollen welt under her eye.

INT. SABRINA'S APARTMENT - LATER

SABRINA and AMY sit at the table eating pancakes, except AMY hasn't touched her food.

SABRINA
(whispering)
Pancakes were never Annette's
forte.

SABRINA hands her the syrup, slides the butter over.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
Mrs. Buttersworth always helps...

AMY'S still not amused, a locked-jaw stare:

SABRINA (CONT'D)

Want to tell me about that shiner?

AMY'S all ears now.

AMY

I wish she was never born.

SABRINA

You never look good putting someone else down.

AMY

Maxine only cares about Maxine.
I hate everything about her.

SABRINA

You get that hate out of your heart, Amy. That's not who you are.

ANNETTE steps in, sets down orange juice before them. SABRINA about to take a sip of hers when...

AMY

How come nobody ever picks me?

SABRINA...caught completely off guard by that one, unequipped and unprepared to answer.

SABRINA

Most people give up on their dreams. They live their whole lives never going after what they really want. Even if they figure it out, they let fear dictate their direction.

AMY nods, processes that.

AMY

Did you always follow your dreams?

SABRINA

Yes and no. I used to care what people think, but all that does is confuse the heart.

She takes another sip of that juice.

AMY

Guess my parents were confused.
What do you think?

SABRINA

I think I'd like to see you more.

AMY

I see you almost every day. That gym is the only home I got.

AMY sips her orange juice.

SABRINA

Maybe not. See I've been talking with social services and...

(takes a breath)

I'd like you to come and stay with me. What do you think about that?

AMY

You...you want me to stay...

AMY'S eyes fill with tears as she leaps up and wraps her arms around SABRINA.

ANNETTE

Sounds like a "yes", to me.

AMY nods, as SABRINA cries, squeezing her tight. ANNETTE comes over, wraps her arms around both of them as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SABRINA'S APARTMENT, AMY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Weeks later.

AMY ransacks her room looking for something. Crosses to her closet. Tosses clothes everywhere. Nothing.

AMY rubs her empty neck.

CUT TO:

INT. LIFT OFF GYM - DAY

A pair of hands spray ROSIN on their feet. PULL BACK to reveal AMY on a single-tab AERIAL HOOP.

AMY completes the routine, and suspends herself upside-down.

SABRINA (O.S.)

Keep hanging like that you're gonna get stuck.

AMY
The view's better up here.

ANGLE ON: SABRINA grinning in the corner.

SABRINA
Stop hesitating. You're ready.

AMY
I want to be the best.

SABRINA
The best don't rest.

AMY pulls herself up. Rubs her neck. SABRINA notices:

SABRINA (CONT'D)
Stay focused. It'll turn up.

AMY
Can't believe I lost it.

SABRINA
Stay. Focused.

AMY
My arms keep flailing every time I do my crossback-straddle. What am I doing wrong?

SABRINA
I thought it looked good.

AMY
Good isn't perfect. It looks like I'm having a seizure.

SABRINA chuckles.

AMY (CONT'D)
And they'll see that. That it's not perfect. That I can't hold a pose. That I can't do anything unique enough to stand out and get in.

SABRINA
Amy. It's all in your head. I promise you'll get in.

AMY
You're a terrible liar, but I still love you.

SABRINA

If I told you I had a surprise for you, would you stop complaining?

AMY

Absolutely not. Surprises suck.

SABRINA

Stop talking and come over here. Eyes closed, no peeking.

AMY plops down on the chair next to her. Closes her eyes. SABRINA slips the NECKLACE from her pocket onto AMY'S neck.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

Must've slipped off in the parking lot.

AMY opens her eyes and sees: the *DREAM* necklace freshly restored around her neck.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

You ready to fly, now?

AMY smiles. A euphoric smile, we've never quite seen. She kisses SABRINA on the cheek, squeezing her tight. Then, AMY'S smile suddenly fades. Almost bittersweet. SABRINA notices:

SABRINA (CONT'D)

I know that look. What's wrong?

AMY

(a beat)

Nothing. For the first time in my life, nothing's wrong.

SABRINA pulls her in for a bear hug.

SABRINA

You're gonna kill it.

AMY

I love you, mom.

SABRINA

And I love you.

She kisses AMY on the forehead.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

Now, let's go get some fro-yo.

Off AMY smiling --

INT. USC - WAITING ROOM - DAY

AMY lost in music. Runs through the routine in her head.

Parents and dancers, all circulate around a sign posted on the door: USC GLORYA KAUFMAN SCHOOL OF DANCE AUDITIONS.

AMY stares at it. Checks her watch. A suit with a clipboard approaches her. *Where's her mom?*

INT. USC, STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

AMY on stage. Looks past JUDGES into the empty audience. No SABRINA. GRIEG'S "Aase's Death from Peer" CUES UP.

She starts her silk routine. Turns her hesitancy into an electric performance. The JUDGES clearly impressed.

As the music switches for AMY'S next section, she freezes.

JUDGE

Everything alright?

AMY can't speak. She takes a few steps back about to bolt, then sees something from the corner of her eye.

It's SABRINA. Standing with a cane, backstage. ANNETTE behind her with a bouquet of flowers. SABRINA taps her hand on her heart.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Are you ready to continue?

AMY looks back to the judges.

AMY

I'm ready.

New MUSIC CUES UP. A pulsating, HIP HOP-CLASSICAL NUMBER.

AMY leaps into the air, grabs the aerial ring. She twists and turns, elevating her body above and beyond the music.

She performs every flip and pose with perfect execution. The JUDGES, stunned, erupt into applause. As AMY bows...

AMY (CONT'D)

Thank you. Thank you so much!

She runs off smiling behind the curtains...

INT. AUDITORIUM - BACKSTAGE

...rushes backstage. Hugs SABRINA tight, cries tears of joy. The other dancers angrily stare at her in disbelief.

Off her smile, we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ST. TIMOTHY HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Graduation day. AMY walks across the stage, gets her diploma. Tosses her cap in the air.

Poses for pictures. Makes her way through the crowd, finds SABRINA. As AMY hugs her...

AMY

This only happened cause of you.

SABRINA

YOU put in the work. Never forget that.

AMY rests her forehead against SABRINA'S. ANNETTE snaps a photo. Off the FLASH...

MATCH CUT TO:

THE SAME PICTURE...

Framed, hanging on a wall. PULL BACK to reveal AMY, now 21, staring intently at the photo inside...

INT. LIFT OFF GYM - EVENING

Christmas decorations everywhere. As the last class exits...

SUPER: FOUR YEARS LATER

SABRINA (O.S.)

Today was a good day.

AMY turns and sees SABRINA. She now uses a WALKER.

AMY

How ya doin', mom?

SABRINA

Still rollin'.

AMY gives her a long hug. As they part...

SABRINA (CONT'D)
Slick wheels, right?

SABRINA does a two-step shuffle with the walker. AMY smiles.

AMY
Thought you'd have rims by now.

Off SABRINA smiling at the TENNIS ball buffers on the bottom of the walker...

EXT. HAROLD & BELLE'S RESTAURANT - SUNSET

AMY and SABRINA eat creole food on the patio. SOUNDS of the city bustle all around them.

SABRINA
How's college life?

AMY
Feels like summer camp with homework. How's the studio?

SABRINA
Still home.
(then)
Your coach treating you right?

AMY
She's not you. Not even close.
Wants me to wait till fall semester before trying out.

SABRINA
Maybe she sees something you don't.

AMY
Think I should wait?

SABRINA
I think you're only nine credits shy from graduating.

AMY
College isn't going anywhere.

SABRINA
Neither is the tour. You should finish. Get your degree.

AMY
You didn't graduate.

SABRINA
Didn't have time. You do...

AMY
And what happens if I get hurt? I'm
not trying to end up like --

But she catches herself.

SABRINA
Like me?

AMY
No. I didn't say that.

SABRINA
Yeah, you did. It's okay. I get it.

SABRINA stops eating.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
No shame in being scared.

AMY
I'm not scared. It's just --

SABRINA
It's just life.
(takes a breath)
Things happen and we deal with it
the best we can. When I started
dancing I was nine years old going
on thirty. Would spend hours in the
gym until I couldn't lift my legs.
Could barely ride a bike, but I
could dance better than anyone.

SABRINA'S thoughts taking her away from this place...

SABRINA (CONT'D)
I practiced everyday for years and
years and no one could tell me
nothing. Then one day my instructor
in college, pulled me aside and
said, *'Life's a journey, not a
destination.*
(beat)
*I want you to be the best too,
trust me.*

(MORE)

SABRINA (CONT'D)

She said, *'Life's a journey'* and I said *'You're holding me up, how can I get where I'm going!'* Then she smiled and she said, *'the ones who fly, get lost in the sky. You're an eagle, slow down before you fly too high'*.

SABRINA turns her gaze back to AMY.

AMY

Still talk to her?

SABRINA

Not as much as I'd like...

AMY

Was she right?

SABRINA

About what?

AMY

You flying too high. Was she right?

SABRINA

Probably, but I'd never tell her that.

AMY

(beat)

I'm sorry, mom. I didn't mean it.

SABRINA

I know, baby. Everybody falls. But it's not about staying down, it's how quickly you get back up that separates you from the crowd.

(then)

If you think you're ready for your audition, then you're ready. But you know how I feel.

CUT TO:

INT. SABRINA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Christmas Day. AMY, SABRINA and ANNETTE open up presents.

SABRINA

I don't believe it.

SABRINA holds a replica of the AERIAL SILK she gave AMY.

INT. SABRINA'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

AMY paces back and forth as ANNETTE hands SABRINA a glass of water.

AMY

I can't believe he would wait till
New Year's to tell you.

SABRINA

Dr. Winslow can't rush results.
It's not his fault.

AMY

Your kidneys are failing! When can
you get on the list?

SABRINA

Transplants are very risky at my
age. We have to make sure I could
handle the operation.

AMY

This ruins everything. Now you
won't have enough time to make it.

SABRINA

Unless you wait, I'll be there.

AMY

Unless I wait? Why would you say
that? Why would I wait?

SABRINA

Forget I said anything. You're
going to do what you want.

AMY

My show's next month and that's
what you want to say to me?

SABRINA

Stop being dramatic.

AMY

I'm not an actress! I just wish you
actually believed in me.

SABRINA

You know I believe in you.

AMY

Sounds like you're not sure
anymore.

ANNETTE

Amy --

SABRINA

It's fine, Annette.

A long awkward beat.

AMY

My show is at eight. You better be there.

SABRINA

I'll make it. I promise.

AMY walks over and gives SABRINA a half-hearted hug.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

I love you.

AMY

I know.

And AMY walks out. ANNETTE chases after her --

ANNETTE

Amy, wait a minute --

SABRINA hears the front door shut. She closes her eyes a moment and takes a deep breath.

After a beat, she reaches over and opens up a drawer. Pulls out OXYCODONE. Pops two. Hesitates, then takes two more.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. USC, AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Southern California's most prestigious university. The downtown Los Angeles skyline visible in the distance.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

AMY finishes her hair & make-up. The other dancers mill about talking and laughing.

But not AMY. She's on a mission. Bows her head in prayer.

INSTRUCTOR (O.S.)

Amy... five minutes.

She opens her eyes. Stares at her reflection. Then she's up --

We FOLLOW her quickly past the other dancers and sets. A parting of the seas, AMY takes her place in front of the line. She slows her breathing and kisses her necklace.

She looks out into the crowd -- no SABRINA. Starts to freak out. Not sure she can do this without her mom.

AMY
(to herself)
Where are you, mom?

As the music cues up...

EXT. 110 FREEWAY - INTERCUT - CONTINUOUS

A torrential rain. A pick-up truck -- SABRINA'S truck -- caught in it. SHOOTING THROUGH the driver's side window, we can see SABRINA'S face, intense and determined, squinting through the downpour.

INT. USC AUDITORIUM

Title: USC Glorlya Kaufman School of Dance Winter Showcase

A packed house. Students. Faculty. Media. And three JUDGES from UpSwing Aerial Dance Company front and center.

We're mid-way through the routine, but AMY can't focus.

INT./EXT SABRINA'S TRUCK

She looks at the clock, accelerates.

TRUCK'S WHEELS

Hydro-planing, slip-sliding.

INT. USC AUDITORIUM

AMY distracted, but hides it well. Spins. Dips. Swings.

INT./EXT. SABRINA'S TRUCK

The SQUEAL of its BRAKES as SABRINA loses control and smashes into the back of a BIG RIG in front of her!

INT. USC AUDITORIUM

AMY, twists into a fantastic free-fall, but over rotates and loses her footing!

EXT. 110 FREEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Paramedics remove SABRINA from the wreckage. Place her on a stretcher. Check her pulse. Load her into the ambulance.

INT. USC AUDITORIUM

The MUSIC peaks, AMY swings out of control -- comes undone...
She lands -- and her foot snaps! THE AUDIENCE gasps.

INT./EXT. AMBULANCE

A paramedic zaps SABRINA with a defibrillator.

PARAMEDIC

Clear!

Her body convulses violently. No response.

BACK TO:

INT. USC AUDITORIUM, BACK STAGE

A staff member examines AMY'S foot while the show goes on. ANNETTE arrives.

AMY

I can't move my toes. Why can't I
move? What if I broke it?

ANNETTE

Everything's going to be fine. Just
breathe.

INT./EXT. AMBULANCE - CONTINUOUS

The AMBULANCE flies through traffic. SABRINA fading fast.

PARAMEDIC

In three, two, one. Clear!

He shocks her. Her body jolts. She flat-lines.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

ANNETTE paces back and forth, alone, stares at the entrance to the surgery room. Gets a call on her cell. Picks up.

INT. HOSPITAL EXAM ROOM - NIGHT

AMY lies on an exam table as a tech x-rays her foot.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

ANNETTE hangs up the phone. Tears stream down her face.

INT. HOSPITAL EXAM ROOM - NIGHT

More x-rays of AMY'S foot. A surgeon walks in and conducts a thorough examination of the images.

AMY, still flushed, tries to get a read on the doctor.

AMY

Tell me. I can handle it.

The doctor turns to her, removes his glasses...

INT. WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

AMY emerges on crutches. Her foot wrapped in a giant boot. She makes her way over to ANNETTE, senses something's off.

AMY

What happened?

ANNETTE looks up, tears in her eyes.

ANNETTE

(struggles)

It's your mom.

POV THROUGH the exam room window. As ANNETTE talks, AMY shakes her head repeatedly, her knees buckle. ANNETTE catches her as she falls. Holds her close.

Off AMY crying...

We hear: Vera Lynn's *We'll Meet Again* as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOLY CROSS CEMETERY - DAY

SABRINA'S GRAVE-SITE. Friends, students, out of town relatives and former dance colleagues pay their respects.

ANNETTE cries relentlessly. AMY holds her, crying in a state of shock as the casket is lowered. Her focus on...

A shadowy WOMAN distinctly apart from the group. This is DONNA HAINGER, black, mid-sixties, but you'd never know it. She is tense, wide-eyed with concentration and has secrets that no one will ever know. She wipes away a tear.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLY CROSS CEMETERY - LATER

ANNETTE and DONNA walk through the graves.

ANNETTE

Thank you for coming.

DONNA

Should've been here sooner. That south bay traffic --

ANNETTE

(interjecting in unison)
That south bay traffic is
shit.

DONNA (CONT'D)

That south bay traffic is
shit.

They share a laugh.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

Sabrina always said "*give her a cool fifteen -- she'll show...*"

DONNA

That's what I needed back then. If I wasn't at an audition I was there. Used to sleep in the loft.

ANNETTE

It was home. She loved you for that.

DONNA

Never met anyone who loved to fly like her.

(choking up)

I could've done more...

ANNETTE

(thinking)

Maybe you still can...

ANNETTE glances over at AMY. She struggles with her crutches, as they arrive at DONNA'S limousine on the street.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)
 She doesn't look like much, but she
 could be *something*.

DONNA studies AMY, clearly not impressed. AMY approaches...

ANNETTE (CONT'D)
 You doing, okay?

AMY nods, tries to catch her breath.

DONNA
 Doesn't look like it.

AMY
 (firmly)
 I'm fine.

ANNETTE
 Amy Hall, meet Donna Hainger.

DONNA
 Nice to meet you, Amy.

AMY barely shakes this woman's hand.

ANNETTE
 This was Sabrina's coach in
 college. She runs a studio in
 Manhattan Beach.

AMY
 You been in L.A. this whole time?

DONNA
 Thirty years, now.
 (then)
 Annette tells me you can fly.

AMY
 (motions to the crutches)
 Thought I could.

DONNA
 You have a place in mind for your
 P.T.? I know a few spots and --

AMY
 I got it covered.

ANNETTE
 Amy --

ANNETTE goes to stop her, but DONNA waves her off. A beat of them watching AMY struggle through the pain, and then:

ANNETTE (CONT'D)
She really is amazing.

DONNA
That were true, she wouldn't be on those crutches.

ANNETTE
You're probably right, but Sabrina saw something in her. Said Amy reminded her of you.

DONNA looks over at AMY then back at ANNETTE. After a beat...

DONNA
When she loses the stilts, send her my way.
(hands Annette her business card)
No promises.

ANNETTE
Thank you, D.

She gives her a hug and locks eyes with AMY.

CUT TO:

INT. SABRINA'S BEDROOM - LATER

AMY sits on SABRINA'S bed. Runs her fingers through the SILK SABRINA gave her. Lies down clutching it to her chest.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PANN'S RESTAURANT - MORNING

A 50's style diner in tip top shape. ANNETTE and AMY eat at a corner booth in the back.

AMY
It's over and you know it.

ANNETTE
That's not what he said.

AMY
I can't move the same. I'll never move the same. So it's over.

ANNETTE

Maybe it's a blessing in disguise.

AMY

How is this a blessing?

ANNETTE

I'm not saying what *happened* was a blessing. I'm saying the *situation* you now find yourself in is an opportunity to come back stronger. Be better than you've ever been.

AMY looks away passive.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

A stress-fracture isn't a death sentence. Think of it as a really, really bad sprain.

AMY turns back to face her.

AMY

Did we see the same x-rays?

ANNETTE

I'd like to think so.

AMY

Good.

ANNETTE

But I'm also looking at you.

(then)

When you're up it's never as good as it seems, and when you're down, you never think you'll be back up again. But you, Amy Hall, you always get up. You always fight back. You always stand on your own, and this is no different.

AMY

Yeah, well I never had to take six to nine months off during the most important year of my life.

ANNETTE

Boot's going to disappear by spring break, which still gives you all summer to heal before the fall showcase.

AMY shakes her head. Not convinced. ANNETTE checks her watch.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)
My Uber's gonna be here any minute.

AMY
Where you going this time?

ANNETTE
Hawaii. Three weeks on Maui then
I'm off to Milan for fashion week.

AMY
All that just to lie there, you
living the dream, sis.

ANNETTE
Modeling's a little more than that.

AMY
Your life is an Instagram reel.

ANNETTE
(laughs)
I'll take that as a compliment.
Now, you sure you have a ride to
your M.R.I.?

AMY
(annoyed)
Yes, Aunt Annette.

ANNETTE
And when is it?

AMY
Have to check my calendar...

ANNETTE
Not necessary.

AMY'S phone buzzes. Text reads: Friday 3/24 9:30am.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)
And if you ever forget again, I'll
call you every day to remind you.

AMY
You're crazy.

ANNETTE
You're learning.

ANNETTE'S phone buzzes. The UBER'S arriving shortly.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)
Do me a favor after I leave?

AMY
Anything...

ANNETTE
(pulls out Donna's card)
Call her.

AMY sees the name on the card. Immediately annoyed.

AMY
Don't like her.

ANNETTE
You met her once.

AMY
More than enough time to decide I
don't need to know her. Mom was
easy on her, I don't have to be.

ANNETTE
What happened between them was
before your time. She wants to
help.

AMY
Don't need it.

ANNETTE
Don't waste her time. Sabrina would
want you to work with the best.

AMY
I'm just keeping it real.

ANNETTE
You know what happens when keeping
it real goes wrong... Call her.

AMY shakes her head as they both rise from the booth and hug.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)
You are what you repeatedly do,
Amy. I love you, love you, bighead.

AMY
(laughs)
Love you too.

CUT TO:

EXT. VERMONT BLVD, LOS ANGELES - LATER

AMY hobbles down the street. Stops. Breathes heavily.

INT. WALGREENS PHARMACY - MOMENTS LATER

AMY hands the cashier money for PERCOCET.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY APARTMENTS - NIGHT

A retro two-story house that's been converted into an apartment complex, in Redondo Beach.

INT. AMY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

AMY pops open the pill bottle. Tosses two back. Slugs water.

Slams her medicine cabinet closed -- catches a glimpse of herself in the mirror. Doesn't like what she sees.

CUT TO:

EXT. GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

4 Weeks later.

AMY'S phone buzzes as she exits her Uber. INSERT of her TEXT reads: *You got this! Love u!! -- Aunt A.*

AMY moves quickly on her crutches. Much faster than before.

INT. GENERAL HOSPITAL - LATER

AMY'S POV - DOCTOR GERTZ. A handsome, man in his fifties. He stands in front of his computer with AMY'S MRI results.

He talks in slight SLOW-MOTION. We only see AMY smiling.

Suddenly:

DR. GERTZ
Amy? Did you hear me?

We've snapped out of it. No more SLOW-MO.

AMY
I heard you.

DR. GERTZ
You know what this means?

AMY
My tendons aren't as damaged as you thought.

DR. GERTZ
Yes and no.

AMY
You said it's closer to a bad sprain, and I feel stronger already.

DR. GERTZ
We still don't want to rush anything. Needs to heal properly.

AMY
How soon till I get this boot off?

DR. GERTZ
Amy, listen. I think a few more weeks with the cast wouldn't hurt. Could it be sooner? Yes, but we don't want to aggravate it.

AMY really contemplates this. A long extended beat. Then:

AMY
Is that what I'm supposed to say at my audition when I can't fly? *Sorry my routine sucks, I just cut my boot off and don't want to aggravate it...*
(beat)
Come on, Dr. G, there has to be something else I can do. Please...

Off the DR.'S concerned look...

EXT. GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

AMY emerges boot-free, now wearing a smaller medical shoe; almost indistinguishable from a sneaker.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - LATER

AMY moves with purpose now.

EXT. LINCOLN BLVD. - DAY

We catch up with her a few blocks later, then AMY'S ears perk up. STAR WARS THEME MUSIC...

Can't tell where it comes from. She walks to the end of an alley, and sees people enter a hidden passageway.

Intrigued, she follows them, and walks down a flight of stairs into heaven: a VINTAGE FILM STORE.

She sees a giant SCREENING ROOM to her right, and an ARCADE upstairs filled with film-inspired games like: pinball, darts and N64 Goldeneye. In this moment, she thinks of ANTHONY.

CUT TO:

INT. COBURN'S FILM EMPORIUM - LATER

The Austin Powers Theme Song plays throughout the store.

An old-school POPCORN MACHINE shoots out a fresh batch.

AMY vibes with the music as she eats her POPCORN and looks through all types of CLASSIC DVDS, MEMORABILIA, and POSTERS.

The front door opens. A Man walks in. Can't see his face.

Unbeknownst to AMY, he enters her aisle.

Her NECKLACE gets caught in the DVD'S. The MAN notices.

The MAN gently frees the NECKLACE, but holds it a moment.

She briefly looks right at the MAN, right at us...

AMY

'Preciate it.

Somehow, AMY has not recognized him. She moves to walk past him, but the Man holds steady.

AMY (CONT'D)

Yo, what's up? You mind --

AMY finally looks up, and her eyes settle on: ANTHONY. The two of them silently hold each other's gaze.

ANTHONY

Is that you, Aim?

A very long, very dense, very quiet beat. And then:

AMY
Ant?

ANTHONY
Come here --

AMY immediately smiles. And they embrace. ANTHONY wraps his arms around her: warm, caring, *loving*.

CUT TO:

EXT. WESTWOOD VILLAGE - NIGHT

AMY and ANTHONY walk through the outdoor mall eating ice-cream.

ANTHONY
Thought you'd be on a milk carton
by now. Ain't seen you in
what...seven, eight years?

AMY
More like ten, but you never could
count.

ANTHONY
I get by.

AMY
Barely.

ANTHONY
I'm sorry, who's cheat sheet did we
use? Oh that's right, it was mines.

The two friends smile. Falling back into the swing of things.

AMY
And now they're letting you operate
on people?

ANTHONY
It's scary, I know.
(laughs)
Got into physical therapy back in
high school.

AMY
Somebody needs to talk to
Pepperdine about their admissions
process.

ANTHONY

You should file a complaint with
the board of directors.

AMY

First order of business as soon as
I wake up.

ANTHONY

Still waiting on a few ivies to get
back with me, but med-school is
looking good.

AMY

When do you find out?

ANTHONY

Seven weeks, five days and sixteen
hours from now.

AMY

Good thing you're not nervous.

They share a laugh.

AMY (CONT'D)

Any places around here?

ANTHONY

Bruins are at the top of my list.
All comes down to Stanford.

AMY

Proud of you, Ant.
(then)
Anything back east?

ANTHONY

I got a few safety picks.
(then)
Should hear something before my
internship ends.

AMY

Not a bad way to spend the summer.

ANTHONY

It's a dream, Aim. Been in love
with the Lakers since we were kids,
now I could work with them.

AMY

For real?

ANTHONY

It's crazy. They put me in this private clinic where they all exercise in the off season.

(then)

Whole thing's a fantasy for real.

They share a moment here, the familiarity clear.

AMY

I used to feel like that, too.

ANTHONY

You'll get it back. Trust --

AMY

After my scholarship, I thought I was set. Do school a year or two, then go on tour...

ANTHONY

And now?

AMY

(beat)

Who knows. One week it's one thing, next week it's a different story. With Sabrina gone... I don't know what to do anymore.

ANTHONY

What's up with the new coach? Old lady from the funeral...

AMY

She's not my coach.

ANTHONY

Not right now. You should talk to her.

AMY

I got other things to do.

ANTHONY

That a fact?

AMY

It *is*.

ANTHONY

You should reach out. See what she's about.

AMY
We're rhyming now?

ANTHONY
Here and there... But you know I'm
right. Can't always fly solo.

AMY
That's the only way to fly.

ANTHONY
You know where you're doing P.T.
yet?

AMY
I got it handled.

ANTHONY
Still don't know when to ask for
help, huh?

AMY
Been "*solo*" for ten years without
you.

They arrive at the bus stop.

AMY (CONT'D)
This is me. You know your way?

ANTHONY
I got it handled.

She gives him a hug. It goes on for a beat. As they part...

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Sleep on it?

AMY
Ant, really it's fine, I --

ANTHONY
I know you're fine, Aim. I'm just
trying to make you better.

He makes it impossible not to smile. As she enters the bus...

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Sleep on it --

AMY smiles as the doors close. Engine revs. ANTHONY watches
the bus drive away into the fog.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AMY'S STREET - NIGHT/DAY

A time-lapse. The pier shuts down only to wake back up again.

INT. AMY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

AMY takes two PERCOCET. Slams water. Relaxes.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. DANCE CENTER - MORNING

A private studio in REDONDO BEACH. The receptionist buzzes her in.

JENNIFER

Still at it, huh?

AMY

Always. Is two open?

JENNIFER

Girl we go through this everyday,
it's not even eight in the morning.
They're *all* open.

AMY

You're the best, Jen.

INT. STUDIO 2 - MOMENTS LATER

AMY walks into the center underneath the SILKS.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO 2 - LATER

We're in the middle of a routine. AMY covered in sweat.

A MONTAGE OF ACTION SHOTS: AMY spins, arms twists out of control, her legs buckle, she falls.

Her body hits the floor. Over and over and over again.

She hangs upside down. Screams. Jumps down. Grabs her water bottle, but it's empty. She tosses it, defeated.

CUT TO:

INT. AMY'S APARTMENT - DAY

AMY sits in her living room holding her cell in one hand, and DONNA'S card in the other.

Her finger lingers over the "text" button, but she can't press it. She goes to the bathroom, grabs her pills.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. COBURN'S FILM EMPORIUM - LATER

BACK TO THE FUTURE plays in the screening room. AMY anxiously plays pinball.

She glances over at the SCREENING ROOM. Instantly thinks of ANTHONY. Off her holding this gaze --

EXT. STREET - EVENING

AMY listens to the ringing through her phone. Then:

DONNA (O.S.)
Go for Donna.

AMY hesitates.

DONNA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Hello? Anybody home?

She finally relents.

AMY
Hi...Um... I'm here.

DONNA (O.S.)
Who's here?

AMY
(hesitantly)
It's Amy.

DONNNA (O.S.)
Who?

AMY
Sabrina's student -- kid.

INTERCUT TO:

INT. DANCE STUDIO, DONNA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A state-of-the-art aerial palace.

Top level. She oversees a huge studio. Classes in session beneath her on the first and second floor. As she watches...

DONNA
Didn't think you'd call.

AMY (O.S.)
Almost didn't.

DONNA
Uh-huh.
(then)
They still got ya on the stilts?

AMY (O.S.)
Nah. Been off them for a couple of weeks.

DONNA
Uh-huh.
(then)
So, you ready to get back to work?

BACK TO: AMY

AMY
I think so...

DONNA (O.S.)
Shouldn't have to "think" about it.
Let's try this again.
(then)
You ready to work?

AMY
Always.

BACK TO DONNA:

DONNA
Tomorrow. Six a.m. Address is on the card. You're late, don't show.

She hangs up.

BACK TO AMY:

Stares at her phone. Nobody's ever talked to her like that.

INT. DONNA'S OFFICE

DONNA stands there lost in thought. Off her unsure look...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DONNA'S HOME - MORNING

A beautiful Spanish Style mansion on Manhattan Beach.

INT. DONNA'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

DONNA gets ready to leave. Packs her bag, puts on her shoes. Her loving husband EARL, Black, 60's, stands in the doorway.

EARL

Thought we talked about this...

DONNA

She called, now I have to help.

EARL

You don't have to do anything.
Remember?

DONNA

It's for Sabrina. It's what she
would've wanted. So --

EARL

(cutting her off)
So make sure she has fresh flowers
every week and move on. She left
you, remember? She quit.

DONNA

I was there, Earl. I remember.

EARL

Doesn't seem like you do.

DONNA

Look: Sabrina wasn't perfect, but
who is? This isn't Sabrina.

DONNA heads for the door. EARL blocks her...

EARL

We both know how this story ends,
Donna.

DONNA
 It's one audition, Earl. She
 doesn't move how she's supposed to,
 I'll walk.
 (then)
 I love you, baby.

She gives him a peck on the cheek and walks out.

EARL
 (sotto)
 Love you too.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - LATER

A JAZZ-infused RAP track blasts through the speakers.

Dozens of hoops and silks hang from the vaulted ceilings,
 over a massive dance floor big enough for a football field.

AMY is mid-routine as DONNA watches from below --

DONNA
 Stop rushing. You're pacing's off.

AMY
 I'm on beat...

DONNA
 You're early. Slow it down.

AMY
 I'm not early!

DONNA
 Watch that foot!

AMY spins, loses control, twists into a free-fall and --
 DONNA catches her at the last possible moment.

DONNA (CONT'D)
 When I say you're early. You're
early.

She drops her. AMY struggles to catch her breath. Rises.

AMY
 You weren't talking at me the whole
 time I would've had it!

DONNA
 If you had it, you wouldn't be
 wearing that shoe.

AMY crosses to her bag annoyed. Grabs some water.

DONNA (CONT'D)

That what happened a few months
back? You rushed it?

She walks back over. Gets on the silks.

DONNA (CONT'D)

That's why you're scared isn't it?

AMY

Nothing scares me.

DONNA

You're a worse liar than your mama.

AMY

You my shrink now?

DONNA

We need to be able to talk. You're
not comfortable up there, it shows.
So, what's the problem?

AMY adjusts her hands and legs. Prepares to go again.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Can't move past something if you
keep burying it.

AMY

We dancing or what?

The two in a stand-off. Then:

DONNA

We're done.

AMY

It's been like half an hour...

DONNA packs up her stuff.

DONNA

I know what time it is, thank you.

AMY touches down on the floor.

AMY

So, that's it? You quitting?

DONNA
 Quitting isn't in my vocabulary.
 When you're able to face your fears
 head on, no one will be able to
 stop you.

She heads for the exit. Shouts over her shoulder:

DONNA (CONT'D)
 Same time tomorrow.

Off AMY fuming...

CUT TO:

EXT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTER - DAY

A modern training facility in El Segundo. AMY exits an Uber and enters.

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTER, LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

AMY signs in with the receptionist...

RECEPTIONIST
 How can I help you?

AMY
 I was looking for someone...friend
 of mine...

RECEPTIONIST
 Name?

AMY
 Anthony - Anthony Carmichael.

RECEPTIONIST
 (as she types)
 Okay. He's downstairs in the weight-
 room. Security --

DARRYL DUN, early 40's, portly, approaches holding a clipboard.

DARRYL
 Hi! I'm Darryl. Right this way.

As they walk --

DARRYL (CONT'D)
 It's Annie, right?

AMY

Amy --

DARRYL

Right... Ant said you were going to be stopping by.

AMY

I'm sure he did.

They enter an elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

DARRYL

Yeah, we love Ant around here. Quick-thinker that kid. Good teeth.

AMY forces a smile. The doors open. As they walk...

DARRYL (CONT'D)

You guys met in junior high, right?

AMY

More or less.

DARRYL

Cool. Cool. You're local, yeah?

AMY

You could say that.

They arrive at a set of double-doors, and enter the...

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DARRYL walks quickly with AMY in tow. ANTHONY finishes up a post-workout stretch with a client.

DARRYL

Alright, you should be all set.

AMY

Thanks.

And he's gone. Gives ANTHONY a high-five on his way out. AMY hangs by the door, adjusts her shoe boot.

ANTHONY (O.S.)

Darryl, stop this woman -- she's trying to kill us.

DARRYL bursts out laughing as AMY rises--

AMY

Your palms are like Niagara Falls.
Remember when Mr. Nielsen made you
wear gloves?

ANTHONY

Yeah. His breath smelled like burnt
mustard and old cereal.

AMY

He woke up every morning and chose
violence.

ANTHONY pulls her in for a hug as they both laugh.

ANTHONY

You're late.

AMY

Not by my watch.

As they break...

ANTHONY

You hungry? I know a place...

INT. EL TARASCO - AFTERNOON

AMY and ANTHONY eat burritos at a diner counter.

ANTHONY

(off burrito)
This salsa is fire.

AMY

Green one is better, but you never
could handle that kick.

ANTHONY takes the GREEN SALSA right out of AMY'S hand just as she's about to pour it on her food, and smothers his burrito in it. He takes a huge bite.

A beat passes.

Then it's too much -- the heat takes over -- his mouth is on fire -- he grabs his water and downs the whole glass.

He looks over at AMY, panting, relieved. They have a moment. Then erupt into laughter.

ANTHONY

So...

AMY

So...you still can't handle spicy food.

ANTHONY

I got jalapenos in mine. How was the other thing?

AMY

It was okay. Felt faster.

ANTHONY

Donna was cool?

AMY

In the 70's...? Maybe the 80's if she styled her hair, right.

ANTHONY

(laughs)

It's always rough after a break. You'll be fine.

AMY

My foot was shot after half an hour. Feels like it's gonna snap. Can't fly with one leg.

ANTHONY

So you ready to do something about it, or you just gon' keep whining?

AMY

You sure you got time for me? Looked pretty busy in there.

ANTHONY

There you go...

AMY

There I go?

ANTHONY

Stop doing what I know you know you're doing. Donna's good people.

AMY

She seemed liked a *very sweet lady*.

ANTHONY

Just be cool, Aim.

AMY
I'm not cool?

ANTHONY
Not since '05.

AMY playfully throws a chip at him.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
So we doin' this or what?

Off AMY'S smile --

EXT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTER, ROOF - LATER

PUSH IN ON ANTHONY and AMY, mid-workout. Drenched in sweat.
AMY does weighted walking lunges.

ANTHONY
Nice. Remember to breathe. Good --

ANTHONY walks alongside her stride for stride --

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Want to really engage that core --
Can you feel it?

AMY nods. He sets his weights down. Moves to spot her --

AMY
You always know you wanted to work
in sports?

ANTHONY
Yeah. Always knew I could fall back
on training, if I didn't go pro.

SHE finishes walking. Sets the weights down. Moves to a LEG
CURL machine --

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
I want ten more. Light work --

AMY
What happened with football?

ANTHONY
Got recruited early. Grew like
seven inches one summer and got a
full ride back east. Then junior
year in the last game of the season
I dove and tore my ACL. Never
recovered after that.

AMY finishes her last rep. Releases the grip on the leg curl.

AMY
Sorry, Ant.

ANTHONY
That's life, right?

AMY
So I hear...
(then)
What's up with your list? Hear
anything from those schools, yet?

ANTHONY hands her a bottle of water.

ANTHONY
Next week.
(then)
Let's go. Sun's leaving us in
thirty minutes.

As they get back to it...

CUT TO:

INT. ANTHONY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - NIGHT

ANTHONY enters a sleek, one-bedroom in Torrance. We TRACK him into the kitchen as he grabs a beer. Cracks it open. Drinks --

He sits on the couch. Sifts through the mail. Nothing.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DANCE STUDIO - MORNING

AMY covered in sweat. Shows signs of her earlier greatness before her accident. Totally in her element.

Unbeknownst to her, DONNA enters. She watches AMY, and for a moment...she's breathtaking.

The music ends and she gets down, crosses to her bag. She immediately grabs her pills and takes them with water --

DONNA (O.C.)
Sorry I'm late.

AMY
Wanted to warm-up.

DONNA

You need drugs for that? A warm-up?

AMY

Once this shoe comes off I'll --

DONNA

You'll what? Stop buying them? Stop taking them? Doesn't work like that.

AMY

We gonna train or what?

DONNA

You want to train with me, you do it without the trash.

(then)

Now hand it over.

AMY

What?

DONNA

All of it, or you can walk.

AMY stares at her for a beat. Turns back to her bag and grabs a half-full bottle of PERCOCET.

AMY

Happy?

DONNA

This all of it?

AMY

Yeah.

DONNA looks her over.

DONNA

You positive?

AMY nods. DONNA pockets the pills. Sets her bag down.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Good. Now get ready --

DONNA cues up a new song on her iPhone. An up-beat pop/hip-hop mix blares through the speakers, as we...

CUT TO:

INT. DANCE STUDIO - LATER

AMY and DONNA in a COMPLEX dance workout. Quick cuts of twists, spins, climbs and drops. It's intense. Fast.

Exactly what AMY needs. But she's tired. Worn out.

DONNA slightly impressed. As they sit to the side...

DONNA
Nice moves up there.

AMY
Same time tomorrow?

DONNA
Tomorrow we eat. You know where the Strand is?

AMY drinks water, nods.

DONNA (CONT'D)
Good. Be there seven-p.m. sharp.
(hands her card)
Here's the address. You'll get to meet Earl, my husband. He's a terrible cook.

AMY
Great...

DONNA rises and playfully tosses a towel on AMY'S head. She removes it, smiles.

DONNA
Bring a cheese platter. The one with both kinds. He likes those.

Off DONNA'S mischievous grin --

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTER - NIGHT

ANTHONY rolls out the knots in AMY'S legs. Massages her arms. Performs various stretches.

The session ends. AMY sits off to the side, wraps her foot. ANTHONY closes up for the night, notices...

ANTHONY
That's too tight.

AMY
It's better like this.

ANTHONY

Let me see --

ANTHONY takes the tape and gently re-does AMY'S wrap.

She takes notice of his skill and patience. For the first time ever, looks at him as more than a friend.

He finishes. She snaps back to reality.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

See the difference?

AMY rotates her foot.

AMY

Feels a lot better.

A beat of them just staring at each other. And then:

ANTHONY

I was thinking...

AMY (CONT'D)

So listen...

Both laugh. After a moment...

AMY (CONT'D)

What are you thinking about, Ant?

ANTHONY

One of my clients got some tickets to this Dodgers game Saturday and --

AMY

Yes.

ANTHONY

For real?

AMY

I love baseball. You know this.

ANTHONY

That's what's up. It's box seats and they'll be some other clients there, so dress nice.

AMY

I don't dress nice?

ANTHONY

Sweats and slip-ons ain't nice.

AMY

Forget you. Who they playing?

ANTHONY

Think the Giants are in town.

AMY

Cool. I'll get my jersey ready.

ANTHONY smiles, rises. We stay with AMY. She rubs her foot.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. DONNA'S HOUSE - EVENING

A MEDITERRANEAN feast on the balcony overlooking the Pacific. EARL, DONNA and AMY seated at the table. As they eat...

DONNA

Get you a little taste of everything.

AMY stares at the delicious food.

AMY

Thought you said he couldn't cook?

EARL

How do you know it's not take out?

They all share a laugh as AMY digs in --

EARL (CONT'D)

Donna tells me you're pretty good.

AMY

Used to be. She train you, too?

EARL

Something like that.

DONNA

We were in a show together.

EARL

Just one?

DONNA

One plus a tour and a few more after that.

EARL

Then somebody got booked in Europe and forgot how a telephone works.

AMY

Damn, Donna! You couldn't call the man?

DONNA

Oh, I called. Trust me, I knew how to work a telephone, honey. Even promised to meet him for dinner when I came back to L.A. Harold and Belle's was our spot. Remember, Earl?

EARL

(to AMY)

She had on this great black dress, looked just like Diahann Carroll.

AMY

(to DONNA)

I didn't know you owned a dress --

DONNA

(to AMY)

Girl, hush. Pay attention.

EARL

Waiter sat her down and I froze.

AMY

You froze?

EARL

This was during her first world tour. At that time she'd only been gone a few months, but I wasn't ready to see her again.

AMY

(to DONNA)

He ghosted you?

DONNA

Yes, indeed. Two of the most embarrassing hours of my life.

AMY

That's messed up, Earl!

EARL

I wasn't very honest with myself when she left. Didn't know how to say goodbye again; so I never did.

(MORE)

EARL (CONT'D)

Just watched her through the window until the rain started to come down, and then I left. Wouldn't see her again for almost a decade.

AMY

(to DONNA)

Please tell me you hit him when you saw him again.

EARL

Not exactly...

DONNA

I may have accidentally spilled my drink on him after he so rudely bumped into me.

EARL

Hadn't been to Pip's in a long time. Didn't even recognize her at first, and we happened to both be there on different dates and --

DONNA

(cutting him off)

And that's when I heard him ordering an old fashion with "extra cherries" at the bar, and when I turned around, there he was --

EARL

Donna wasn't too keen on my lady's perfume --

DONNA

Or the lipstick on your cheek --

EARL

So, she let me know it. I called her a week straight until she agreed to see me for coffee, and that was that.

EARL and DONNA stare at each other lovingly for a beat --

EARL (CONT'D)

(to AMY)

If you're not honest with yourself, you'll never get what you want. Don't wait to start living your dreams. Life happens anyway.

AMY

(beat)

Sometimes I feel lost. Like maybe I should hang it up.

DONNA

Sabrina helped you discover these talents for a reason. You owe it to yourself to find out why.

AMY nods. Appears to have a breakthrough.

CUT TO:

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTER - EVENING

ANTHONY in his office with the other interns. He wraps things up for the day. Extra dressed up. DARRYL enters.

Notices the threads:

DARRYL

Hot date tonight?

ANTHONY

Your mom didn't tell you?

Everybody laughs.

DARRYL

The jacket's a nice touch. Blue is her favorite.

ANTHONY

Thank you, son.

DARRYL

What's her name, idiot?

ANTHONY

Think you know it already.

DARRYL

It's that girl who stopped by isn't it? The one from junior high.

ANTHONY

Nothing gets passed you, D.

DARRYL

(thinking, then getting
it)

Sarah!

ANTHONY
More like, *Amy*.

DARRYL
Close enough. Where you taking her?

ANTHONY
That's classified.

ANTHONY shuts down his computer. Grabs his coat.

DARRYL
She taking you out to celebrate?

ANTHONY
What are we celebrating?

DARRYL
Stanford. What else?

He crosses for the door.

ANTHONY
Not cool, D. You know I still
haven't heard.

DARRYL
Really? That sucks. Maybe tomorrow.

ANTHONY
(to group)
Later, guys.

INTERNS
Peace!

ANTHONY starts to leave.

DARRYL
Hey Ant...

ANTHONY turns back --

ANTHONY
What?

DARRYL
I think you dropped this.

ANTHONY
What'd I drop?

DARRYL motions to ANTHONY'S desk. ANTHONY looks over and sees an envelope labeled: STANFORD UNIVERSITY. He crosses over...

ANTHONY stares at his future.

DARRYL
Open it, boss.

A beat. Then as quickly as humanly possible, he rips it open.
Off his blank stare...

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

AMY looks stunning. As ANTHONY drives...

AMY
You know the speed limit is 55
right?

ANTHONY
You sure it didn't say 75?

AMY
Slow down before we miss the exit.
Dodger stadium is coming up.

ANTHONY
Nobody likes a backseat driver.

AMY
Get over, Ant. We're gonna miss the
first pitch.

ANTHONY
Gonna miss more than that.

AMY
Hey -- that's our exit --

The car flies past the DODGER STADIUM exit --

AMY (CONT'D)
So you're just not gonna tell me
where we're going?

ANTHONY
It's called a *surprise*.

AMY
This isn't one of those corny
picnic-in-the-park things is it?

ANTHONY
 Guess you'll just have to wait and
 see.

CUT TO:

EXT. L.A. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

An architectural gem nestled in the heart of downtown.

Tonight Bizet's Les Pecheurs de Perles opens. A dazzling opera featuring the world's most renowned aerialists.

ANTHONY escorts AMY through the packed audience. Men and women in tuxes and night gowns pile in.

PRESS everywhere. AMY sees the banner with the AERIALISTS, and her heart skips a beat.

She looks shocked. ANTHONY notices.

ANTHONY
 You cool?

AMY
 Always.

As they walk in --

CUT TO:

INT. L.A. OPERA HOUSE - LATER

AMY and ANTHONY watch the mesmerizing show, performed by some of the best aerial acrobats the world has ever seen.

They're both in awe, but while ANTHONY sneaks little glances at AMY, her eyes are glued on the dancers.

The love of performing returns to her soul.

CUT TO:

EXT. LITTLE TOKYO - NIGHT

Post-show, AMY and ANTHONY walk. She plays back the performance in her head. ANTHONY picks up on it.

ANTHONY
 Going over the moves, aren't ya?

AMY
They were alright.

Off his disappointed look.

AMY (CONT'D)
Fine -- it was amazing! They were
the best.

ANTHONY
That's where you'll be one day.
Staples Center shit --

She looks over at him, forces a smile.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Uh-oh, I know that look --

They come to a bridge overlooking the city. AMY leans on the railing. ANTHONY does the same. A long, quiet beat.

AMY
Tonight was really great. I had a
good time, it's just...

ANTHONY
It's just... what?

AMY
I don't think I can do it, anymore.
Not like that.

ANTHONY
That's that bull-shit again. You're
as good as any of those dancers we
just saw, and you know it.

AMY
You're biased.

ANTHONY
Damn right I'm biased. I never met
anyone who loved to dance like you.
You're getting stronger every day
and I see how much you love it. I
can see it right now.

AMY
You don't know everything.

ANTHONY
Never said I did, but I do know
this.

(MORE)

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

When you're on that stage, nothing can stop you. You just off in your own world, floating, lost --

A long beat passes. Finally, she looks over at him.

AMY

Maybe I'm tired of being in my own world.

She stares out at the city.

AMY (CONT'D)

Maybe all I want is to see my mom again. But that won't ever happen.

ANTHONY

Don't do that, Aim.

AMY

Why'd she have to die, Ant? Hmm?
Why'd she have to die?

ANTHONY

She's still with you. She'll always be with you.

ANTHONY holds her close, tries his best to comfort her.

AMY

Doctors say she died instantly, so she didn't suffer.

(then)

Last thing I did was yell at her and I never even got to say goodbye. She knew I loved her, right? Right?

ANTHONY

She knew. She always knew --

AMY chokes on her tears.

AMY

I'm nothing without her.

(then)

When she died, my dream died with her.

ANTHONY

Stop it. If she were alive she'd tell you to go harder. Not quit.

AMY wipes her tears, looks up at him.

AMY
I can't fly without her.

ANTHONY
This really your dream, Amy? I mean
you. This really what you want?

AMY
All my life.

ANTHONY
Then go get it.

AMY stares deeply into his eyes. Then kisses him.

AMY
(as their lips part)
Like that?

ANTHONY
Yeah, that'll work.

Off their shared look of passion...

CUT TO:

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

BEGINS OVER a blend of HIP-HOP/CLASSICAL THEME MUSIC.

DANCE STUDIO

AMY twirls upside-down on her aerial hoop.

She spins with both legs, her right foot gives out. DONNA watches her fall. AMY rises. Begins again.

TRAINING FACILITY

She does an exhausting CARDIO workout with ANTHONY.

DANCE STUDIO

AMY loses her balance and struggles to keep up in DONNA'S advanced class.

AMY'S APARTMENT

ANTHONY cooks dinner for her, she loves spaghetti.

STREET BY COBURN'S FILM EMPORIUM

On way to and from bus stop. Practices as she walks.

DANCE STUDIO

Alone with DONNA. Looks solid. Poised. Confident.

COBURN'S FILM EMPORIUM

ANTHONY and AMY kiss passionately in the back row of the screening room, mimicking the characters' actions on screen.

DANCE STUDIO

By herself. Struggles to find her bearings. Limp back up.

TRAINING FACILITY

Lies on her back. ANTHONY stretches out her legs. DARRYL takes notice from a distance. Concerned by what he sees.

DANCE STUDIO

Worn out during an intense sequence of moves. DONNA pleased.

ANTHONY'S APARTMENT

AMY and ANTHONY make love and listen to new music. Clock says: 3:30am.

DANCE STUDIO

AMY shows flashes of brilliance. Quickly fizzles out.

HOSPITAL EXAM ROOM

Rotates her foot. Doctor approves. She tosses her shoe brace in the trash with authority. Hugs the doctor intensely.

MONTAGE ENDS.**INT. TRAINING FACILITY - DAY**

AMY and ANTHONY finish up another weight-lifting session for the day. Share a long kiss. DARRYL hovers in the hall.

As they exit ANTHONY crosses to talk with an older DOCTOR. AMY walks over to a water cooler. DARRYL blind-sides her.

DARRYL
He's a lucky guy isn't he?

AMY

I'd like to think so.

DARRYL

Stanford seems too good to be true.

AMY has no clue what he's talking about. Plays it cool.

AMY

Yeah. It's his dream. He's going to do great things there.

DARRYL

You gonna try and do your dance thing there, or just wait to see how the audition goes?

AMY

Dance was never a thing. It's my life. Wherever I do it, I'm doing it alone.

DARRYL

Probably better that way.

AMY

You got something to say, say it or shut up. I don't talk in code.

Gives her all his attention now.

DARRYL

Anthony is on his way to becoming one of the top athletic trainer's in the world.

(beat)

He doesn't need any distractions.

AMY

Bro, you don't even know me.

DARRYL is unimpressed and resentful of what he sees.

DARRYL

You're a bad ending waiting to happen. Don't take him with you.

DARRYL walks off. Leaves her crushed. ANTHONY approaches.

ANTHONY

You ready? I need to eat.

AMY'S still in shock.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Aim? You good?

AMY

Huh?..Yeah. Just a migraine.

ANTHONY

Want me to drive you home?

AMY

Nah. I'm cool. Stay and wrap up.
I'll link with you tomorrow.

ANTHONY

Alright. You need anything -- call.

AMY

Yeah... thanks.

He leans in to give her a kiss, but she gives him her cheek, then moves past him. ANTHONY stands there. *What was that?*

CUT TO:

INT. DANCE STUDIO - AMY AND DONNA - MORNING

Practice her silk form to a classical symphony. She's moody, easily annoyed, hasn't slept for days and it shows.

AMY moves slow, can't hold poses. DONNA cuts the music.

AMY

Let's keep going.

DONNA

You never started...

AMY

Skip to the next track. I'm fine.

DONNA

You've been off all day.

AMY

I said I'm fine.

DONNA

No, you're not fine. You're tired, and wasting my time. Perform like this at the tryout -- you're dead.

AMY

I can't work like this.

DONNA

Like what?

AMY

Like this. You screaming at me,
like you're better than me.

She jumps down off the hoops.

DONNA

What's the matter? Your little
boyfriend acting up?

AMY

That's my business.

DONNA

And now I'm making it mine.

AMY

It's my foot. We're doing too much.

DONNA

We're not doing enough. Suck it up.

AMY

Damn, Donna! Gimme a sec. Can we
just pick it up in the morning?

DONNA

Get back up there.

AMY

I said give me a second.

DONNA

In three weeks you don't have a
second!

AMY

I know that!

DONNA

Then act like it! Now quit your
bitchin', and execute, otherwise,
get the hell out of my studio!

AMY looks at her then glances at the exit. Takes a beat, then
walks away. Off DONNA'S defeated stare...

CUT TO:

EXT. REDONDO BEACH PIER - NIGHT

AMY sits at the end of the dock. Watches the waves crash onto shore. Her cell buzzes: it's ANTHONY. She hits ignore.

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK TRAIL - DAWN

AMY hikes up a huge hill. Pushes herself to the limit. Her phone rings: ANTHONY again. She hits ignore. Takes off.

INT. AMY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

AMY can't sit still. She paces back and forth. Glances at her phone. More text messages from ANTHONY. She shuts it down. Walks into her kitchen and immediately grabs her spare PERCOCET. Takes two. Drinks wine to wash it down --

CUT TO:

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTER - DAY

AMY in an intense weight-lifting session. ANTHONY enters.

ANTHONY

Yo --

AMY

Yo --

ANTHONY

You good?

AMY

Uh-huh.

She brushes past him to another machine. Starts a new set --

ANTHONY

Tried calling you...

AMY

Must've been on silent.

ANTHONY

You didn't see my texts?

AMY

I saw them.

A beat. Then ANTHONY cuts the music.

AMY (CONT'D)
Hey, I was listening to that.

ANTHONY
Why you ghosting me?

AMY
Ain't nobody ghosting you, dude --
She brushes past him to another machine --

ANTHONY
(cuts her off)
Then why you acting like you don't
know how to use a phone? What's up?

AMY
Nothing -- need to finish this
workout.

ANTHONY
C'mon Aim --

She moves to pick up weights but ANTHONY blocks her.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Talk to me.

A beat.

AMY
I'm really happy for you, Ant.

ANTHONY
What?

AMY
Stanford's lucky to have you.

ANTHONY'S face: Busted.

ANTHONY
Aim. Listen. I can explain --

AMY
Explain how you lied? Yeah, I bet
it's a good story.

ANTHONY
You got it wrong, Aim.

AMY
I got enough.

ANTHONY

What are you saying?

AMY

I'm saying I gotta do me right now.
Don't have time for distractions.

ANTHONY

It's like that?

AMY

It's time to grow up. We're never gonna get what we want playing house with each other. You leaving is best for both of us, whether you realize it or not.

ANTHONY

I'm going to get everything I want cause I'm putting in the work. Helping you won't ever hurt me. My time is valuable just like yours and when we're together, it's not "playing house", and it's not a distraction. It's a taste of what the future could be. You want us to work, we can do it, but if you don't, you gotta let me know.

AMY

You're gonna be great, Ant. But right now I can't do it. I can't.

ANTHONY tries to get close, but she stops him.

AMY (CONT'D)

Please, stop.

ANTHONY

You something else, Amy.

She watches him leave.

INT. DINER - LATER

AMY picks at her food in a booth near the back.

Two children, a boy and a girl around 13, playfully throw french fries at each other. The girl gets up and walks over to his side of the booth, then sits next to him.

The boy takes out a pair of headphones and plugs them into an iPad. Hands one ear-bud to the girl. A movie starts to play.

AMY watches them enjoy each other. The way they vibe reminds her of memories from a past time.

The little boy looks up, smiles at AMY. She makes a funny face. The little girl notices it, makes a funny face back.

INT. AMY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

AMY sits on the balcony overlooking the ocean. She looks through an old-school photo album filled with memories.

Stares at the graduation day picture of her and SABRINA, both of them overwhelmed with joy. Happy. Except her foot is throbbing. The pain almost unbearable.

She pulls out her PERCOCET, about to take it, but then she stops. SABRINA'S face looks at her from the photo album and AMY breaks down.

She throws the pill bottle as hard as she can into the ocean and screams at the top of her lungs.

AMY

Ahhhh!

She falls to the ground as tears stream down her face. We sit with her a moment, then --

The DOORBELL RINGS...

AMY wipes her face and makes her way inside. She opens the door to find: ANNETTE. They embrace.

CUT TO:

INT. AMY'S APARTMENT - LATER

AMY and ANNETTE in the living room. They watch old family movies. As ANNETTE braids AMY'S hair...

ANNETTE

That's all she wrote, huh?

AMY

Looks like it.

AMY gazes at her younger self, SABRINA and ANNETTE playing at the park in the old home movie.

ANNETTE

There she is... you were what, ten going on thirty?

(MORE)

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

(laughs)
Couldn't tell you nothing.

AMY

Nine and a half. This was right
after my spring recital.

ANNETTE

That's right. Sabrina was on cloud
nine. Remember her clapping?

AMY

The other moms wanted her gone.

They share a laugh. ANNETTE finishes her hair, sits down next
to her on the couch.

ANNETTE

So...you ready for your audition?

AMY

Yup.

ANNETTE

You sure you don't want to call?
You know he'll answer.

AMY

I'm cool. He doesn't want to talk
to me.

ANNETTE

(sarcastic)
Somebody doesn't want to talk to
the amazing Amy? No...it can't be.

AMY laughs through the pain.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

All you have to do, is be you.

AMY

That's probably your worst idea
ever. Pretty sure he hates me.

ANNETTE

Nobody hates you, Aim. Not Ant, not
Donna, no one.

AMY draws back from ANNETTE, wipes her tears.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

They'll be there if you want them too, but you have to let them know how you feel.

AMY'S still not convinced.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

This is your audition, Aim. Nobody else. An opportunity like this is once in a lifetime. Don't waste it.

Off AMY staring...

INT. DANCE STUDIO - MORNING

DONNA in the middle of class. AMY enters. DONNA approaches.

DONNA

You lost?

AMY

Didn't used to be.

DONNA

I tried. Didn't work out.

AMY

That's my bad. I'm ready to listen.

DONNA

Amy, I show people how to fly by themselves based on what they think...

(points to head)

...and what they believe.

(points to heart)

Without trust, it all falls down.

AMY'S speechless. DONNA starts to walk away. Turns back --

DONNA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Ya know I seen this movie before, not a fan of the ending.

DONNA looks at her for a long beat.

DONNA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Good luck, Amy.

DONNA walks off back to class. AMY leaves, crushed.

CUT TO:

INT. DONNA'S HOME - EVENING

DONNA and EARL finish up dinner.

EARL
That took guts.

DONNA
She's brave, I'll give her that.

EARL
(beat)
Amy needs you as much as you need
her. You can't see it yet, but deep
down I know you feel it too.

EARL locks eyes with DONNA, lost in her thoughts.

INT. AMY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

AMY on her cell.

ANTHONY (V.O.)
Hey, this Ant, you know the drill.

AMY hangs up. Her fingers linger over her necklace.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - DAY

DONNA instructs a children's class. AMY enters, approaches --

DONNA
Thought we went over this.

AMY
Maybe I wanna hear it again.

DONNA
You sure this time?

AMY
Yeah. I'm sure.

DONNA
You ever quit on me again, don't
bother coming back.

AMY
Figured as much.
(then)
I'm sorry, coach. For all of it.

DONNA gives her the once over. Then:

DONNA
Go get dressed.

Off AMY'S smile...

CUT TO:

INT. TRAINING FACILITY - DAY

ANTHONY clears out the last of his desk. DARRYL enters.

DARRYL
All packed up?

ANTHONY
Hope so.

ANTHONY gives him a fist bump.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Preciate you, D.

DARRYL
No problem at all. Holler at me
after you graduate.

ANTHONY
For sure.

ANTHONY starts out. Something nags at DARRYL.

DARRYL
Hey, Ant...

ANTHONY turns back. DARRYL approaches.

ANTHONY
What's good?

DARRYL
Just wanted to say, I'm real sorry
things didn't work out with your
lady friend. She was nice.

ANTHONY nods.

ANTHONY
Wasn't meant to be.

DARRYL
Yeah. Guess not.

ANTHONY

Take it easy, D.

He starts off again, but DARRYL cuts him off.

DARRYL

It's just...the other day I may have rubbed her the wrong way. I was just looking out for you, but it's not my business.

ANTHONY

It's in the past man. Me and her wasn't in the cards.

DARRYL

Yeah, but what if I screwed up the deck?

ANTHONY'S stalled.

DARRYL (CONT'D)

You're the smartest dude I ever met, Ant. But take it from somebody who's lived through it, this is a mistake. Y'all belong together, and if you don't tell her how you feel, you're gonna spend the rest of your life saying "what if"?

ANTHONY tries to find the words, but can't. He stares at him.

EXT. USC SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS - EVENING

Establishing of the building, the downtown skyline, etc. A fierce thunderstorm with lightning and thunder pours down on campus.

INT. USC SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS - AUDITORIUM

House lights off. JUDGES in the front row.

INT. BACKSTAGE AREA - AMY

Warms up as other dancers spin around her. Her eyes wander from the clock, to her foot, to the back door.

A sign on it reads: "UPSWING PARIS AUDITIONS." She holds on it, touches her necklace with a sense of deja vu.

ANGLE - WOMAN IN A BLAZER

with a SHARPIE and a clipboard. She calls out:

WOMAN IN SUIT
Hall. Amy HALL...

INT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

The suit walks AMY to the stage. Announces her.

AMY walks on. Chopin's *Nocturne* plays.

AMY jumps onto her sphere and soars like a sparrow.

Her speed and grace are phenomenal. The JUDGES, in awe. As AMY lowers herself to the stage...

JUDGE
Is there anything you'd like to
tell us before your freestyle? A
story you're trying to tell?

AMY lowers her head, then slowly starts to grin.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
Ms. Hall.

She looks up.

AMY
It's about making things happen
when you think you can't. It's
about trusting yourself to get up
after you fall, and go even harder
the next day.
(then)
It's about love.

The JUDGES motion for the music to turn on. Just as AMY'S about to start...

ANTHONY appears backstage, covered in sweat. He places his hand over his heart and smiles at her. She smiles back.

Hayleau's *Go On* begins, a blend of pop, electronic r&b remixed with flashes of CLASSICAL. As the beat drops, AMY erupts into her routine --

AMY makes battered look perfect and fierce look indestructible. She flies with the world on her shoulders and unravels into a stunning finish dangling mere inches from the floor as --

The MUSIC ENDS. The lights come on.

AMY stands in the middle of the stage as ANTHONY lets out a huge applause... The JUDGES are speechless...

...as ANTHONY runs onto the stage and...

ANGLE ON - AMY

Overcome with joy. As ANTHONY approaches she leaps into his arms, holding him tight. She's ecstatic.

JUDGES

Struggle to maintain their composure. They whisper amongst each other in hushed excitement.

ANTHONY

If she's not your lead, y'all are nuts!

AMY pulls ANTHONY back. Approaches the front of the stage.

AMY

Sorry -- thank you --

She starts to exit...

MEAN JUDGE

Ms. Hall!

AMY stops. Turns back to him. The JUDGE smiles.

MEAN JUDGE (CONT'D)

Well done.

AMY'S FACE

Radiant. Her smile lights up the room, as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ECHO PARK LAKE - DUSK

AMY and ANTHONY walk around the lake, the city buzzing with life behind them. As the sun sets...

ANTHONY

They call yet?

AMY

For the umpteenth time, no.

ANTHONY
And when you leave for Paris?

AMY
Supposed to be next week.

She shrugs.

AMY (CONT'D)
But you know how the suits be
acting...All love to your face,
then they forget you as soon as you
walk off stage; so we'll see.
(beat)
Only seen Paris in the movies.

ANTHONY
Never been to Paris. Shoot, never
been out the country.
(pauses)
That's what's up though, you gon'
be a European now.

AMY
Well if I ain't heard yet, I
probably didn't get it.

A moment. She looks at ANTHONY.

AMY (CONT'D)
Anyway, you know where you're going
yet?

ANTHONY
I can't call it...Stanford is the
dream, so...

He goes quiet. Shrugs. AMY looks down, nods. Then --

AMY'S phone rings. ANTHONY immediately smiles --

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
That's them. That's them! Told you!

AMY
Probably just telemarketers.

She hesitates, so ANTHONY grabs the cell and answers --

AMY (CONT'D)
Ant, you little shit --

ANTHONY
(into phone)
Amy Hall's phone...one minute
let me see if she's
available...

ANTHONY holds out the phone. AMY slowly takes it.

AMY (CONT'D)
This is Amy...

SMASH TO BLACK.

SEVEN YEARS LATER

FADE IN ON:

EXT. HARRIS THEATRE, CHICAGO - NIGHT

Tonight, Upswing Dance Company Presents: Tale of Moon Trip.

The banner with the flying AERIALISTS now features AMY, front and center. As the crowd piles in...

CUT TO:

INT. HARRIS THEATRE - LATER

The show just wrapped. PRESS everywhere. AMY smiles as she poses for selfies with fans. Signs autographs, posters...

She moves different. There's a calmness about her with the way she looks and talks now. As the CAMERAS FLASH...

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. AMY'S HOME - MIAMI BEACH - DAY

AMY exits a limo outside a gorgeous beach front mansion. She makes her way to the door, steps in...

It's cool and open inside, classical art and vintage film posters on the walls, training silks hang from the ceiling.

CUT TO:

CLOSE on hands on a foot. They wrap -- but hastily, a tad loose, with no finesse or care.

We pull back, to see an EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL wrapping an ankle. The patient is a MAN of about forty.

Standing by her side is ANTHONY. We're in...

INT. HEAL UP PHYSICAL THERAPY, LOS ANGELES - DAY

...a modern Physical Therapy center, filled with state-of-the-art equipment. After a moment, ANTHONY stops her.

ANTHONY
That's a good start, but you never
want to go that loose.

The INTERN nods.

MAN
This too loose. Fix it, Ant.

ANTHONY reluctantly re-wraps the foot.

ANTHONY
(fixes the wrap)
Better?

The MAN rotates his ankle.

MAN
Better.

ANTHONY
Perfect. You're good to go.
(looks at the girl)
Try to relax your hand when you
start out. Helps with the pressure.

The INTERN nods. ANTHONY smiles again, then walks off.

EXT. HEAL UP PHYSICAL THERAPY, LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

ANTHONY exits, locks up.

WALKS to his car. A new BENZ. Pulls out, drives by STAPLES CENTER.

He notices a massive banner. We see the title: UPSWING. He catches a glimpse of a face on it. It's AMY.

He holds his gaze on the marquee. Reads: *Coming Soon.*

CUT TO:

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE - EVENING

ANTHONY steps in -- to a sleek space with a retro-infused style all its own.

He grabs a beer and cold pizza. Turns on the TV. Kicks back.

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - LATER

ANTHONY laughs as *ZOOLANDER* plays on NETFLIX. He Opens his laptop. Googles: "Upswing tickets"...finds them. Clicks the "BUY" button.

INT. STAPLES CENTER, LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

It's a packed house. A cool blend of all ages and styles.

BACKSTAGE

AMY touches up her final looks. Bows her head in meditation. Opens her eyes. Runs her hand over her necklace.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

ANTHONY parks. Exits. Rounds a corner in front of Staples --

EXT. STAPLES CENTER - CONTINUOUS

He looks up at the arena and sees AMY. Her face the size of two pillars on the banner.

He stops dead in his tracks.

CUT TO:

INT. STAPLES CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

ANTHONY makes his way to the second row. Sits. Slightly nervous, but hides it well.

Just as the lights are about to dim, AMY looks out from backstage and sees ANTHONY.

Stunned. The two LOCK EYES --

AMY watches him. ANTHONY tries to look away. She looks away too. Then they both look back and --

The music starts...

AMY performs at the top of her game. The best we've ever hoped for. Obviously the most skilled Aerialist on stage.

The first song ends and the crowd mildly applauds.

The other dancers exit stage left. AMY gazes up at her silks. Time for her solo number. But she seems lost in a daze.

She looks at ANTHONY. Hayleau's *Go On* begins.

It's AMY and ANTHONY'S song from her last audition.

AMY jumps into her performance.

As she flies, AMY transports the audience to another world of passion, intrigue and mystery -- she inspires the crowd, peaks their interest, and draws them in with every move.

She finishes her routine. The crowd leaps to their feet in applause. AMY smiles at ANTHONY. The stage goes dark.

Now it's intermission. But ANTHONY can't stay.

He reaches the exit doors, steps out, then stops. He turns and looks back at AMY. She looks at him from the stage.

Their eyes lock. A hint of tears in both... And for just a fleeting second, ANTHONY smiles.

It's the kind of smile you'd miss if you blinked -- but it's enough for AMY to know that he's still in love with her.

Then he walks out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. RITZ CARLTON HOTEL - MORNING

Weeks Later.

AMY approaches a limo. A driver loads her suitcases.

INT./EXT. LIMO - LATER

They drive through AMY'S old neighborhood.

DRIVER

This really where you're from?

AMY

Guilty as charged.

DRIVER

It always look like this?

AMY

On a good day if you're lucky.

The driver grins, checks his watch.

DRIVER
We better head to LAX.

AMY nods. Looks out the car window. Lost in her memories.

EXT. COBURN'S FILM EMPORIUM - DAY

ANTHONY walks down the street. He enters the vintage FILM store as the limo drives past him.

INT./EXT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

AMY notices.

AMY
Pull over, up there.

DRIVER
Are you sure? Boarding starts in an
an hour.

AMY
It'll only take a sec --

The driver pulls over. AMY leaps out.

INT. COBURN'S FILM EMPORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

The store hasn't changed a bit. Feels like she was just here yesterday.

She enters. Looks around. Finds ANTHONY fighting with the butter machine for his popcorn. Quietly cursing to himself.

As she approaches, the butter shoots out. ANTHONY closes his eyes in frustration. A hand gives him a napkin. He opens his eyes and freezes.

His eyes settle on AMY. She looks at him.

A very long, very tense, beat. And then:

ANTHONY
Hey, Aim.

AMY
Hey, Ant.

ANTHONY
You lost?

AMY
Wanted to see the old place...then
you showed up.

ANTHONY
That a fact?

AMY
It *is*.

The two of them hold each other's gaze.

ANTHONY
Where ya headed next?

AMY
Back to Miami. Gonna take a little
break.

ANTHONY nods. Picks up his popcorn.

AMY (CONT'D)
What's playing?

ANTHONY
One of our classics.

ANTHONY heads into the screening room. Stops. Looks back...

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
You keep stalling, we're gonna miss
the old school previews.

Off AMY'S smile...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COBURN'S FILM EMPORIUM - LATER

A movie playing: *BACK TO THE FUTURE*, to be exact. AMY and ANTHONY sitting in the back, sharing a bag of popcorn.

They've been here all day. The last two people in the screening room.

ANTHONY looks at her. AMY looks at him. And then she wraps her arms around him, kissing him passionately as Elton John's *Tiny Dancer* begins and we...

FADE OUT.