

MELISSA ON ICE

by

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Blank. Silence, followed by Frédéric Chopin's Nocturne No. 20 in C-sharp minor, Op. posth. playing, featuring the sounds of an acoustic guitar and a violin.

A young woman in a figure skating outfit, ice skates on, plays on that guitar, sitting at an opening of an ice rink. Her name is MELISSA YAMAGUCHI, British-Japanese high schooler. She continues to play before putting it away. She enters the ice while Nocturne No. 20 in C-sharp minor is still heard in the background.

She warms up before reaching the centre of the ice rink. Her figure skating routine begins.

Near the end, MELISSA does a phenomenal spin combination as Nocturne No. 20 in C-sharp minor comes to a close. Finally, the routine ends.

Applause. The darkness surrounding the ice rink lights up as we find people sitting in the audience cheering for MELISSA. She takes a bow.

Then suddenly, MELISSA feels traumatised, like the thought of someone involved in a fatal car crash. She acts like she's about to have a panic attack. She looks around wondering where this strange feeling is coming from.

She leaves the ice rink and immediately rushes toward the exit.

EXT. ICESHEFFIELD, PARKING LOT - DAY

Outside the front entrance to the iceSheffield ice rink in Sheffield, England, United Kingdom, MELISSA desperately tries to find her answer. She looks up, wondering if her answer is there amidst the dark atmosphere covering all over.....

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET IN LONDON - DAY

Another ordinary day on the streets of London, England, United Kingdom. MELISSA plays on her acoustic guitar and sings a song in Japanese in front of passerby.

MELISSA wonders if anyone noticed, then gives an "It's hopeless" expression. She begins to pack up before hearing a person applauding her.

MELISSA finds a young man a few years older than her. He smiles excitedly as he claps, then slowly begins to stop as she notices, his smile fading away into an awkward expression.

YOUNG MAN

Am I doing something wrong?

MELISSA

Oh no, you're not. You're not. I was just about finished playing guitar for the day. Why? Did you want to hear another song?

YOUNG MAN

Listen, I've seen you play that guitar a couple of times now, and I gotta say I haven't seen anyone who can play that instrument better than you can. I mean, it's like you're the next, well, I dunno, KT Tunstall or something like that!

MELISSA

You're not the one for me.

YOUNG MAN

Hey now, let's not get into the lyric references here, unless you want to start a pedophilia joke, which you shouldn't.

MELISSA

Seriously, though, do you really mean that when you say I'm a great guitar player?

YOUNG MAN

Of course I do! You should be proud of yourself! Every time you sit here, I'm the only one who applauds to your songs! Everyone else out here thinks they've got better things to do, like um...

(looks around, then points)

... like watching that street performer over there!

The YOUNG MAN points to a street performer being cheered and applauded.

MELISSA

Well, they sure are a hit!

YOUNG MAN

I'll say.

MELISSA

You really think I can be as great as they are?

YOUNG MAN

Well, do you think you can do the same thing they did?

MELISSA

Not really. All I can do is play the guitar and sing. I don't think there's any other better things I can be able to do.

YOUNG MAN

Well then, if guitar-playing and singing are the best things you can do, that should depend on how many people care about them, but I think you can be better than most people like you out there once you find a way to get their attention. Have you ever considered taking part in Britain's Got Talent?

MELISSA

Well, you see, um ---

YOUNG MAN

You've got to at least show your talents out there! With your guitar-playing and your vocals, you're sure to become famous! How about I start by saying I'm one of your biggest fans? What about a fan club, per se?

MELISSA

Listen, to tell you this, I'm only playing the guitar because it's a hobby, and my parents think I can never make my life out of playing the guitar.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

They think I won't be successful or I can't support myself in the future, or something like that.

(MORE)

MELISSA (CONT'D)

They think not enough people will listen to my songs, or that the music industry is very competitive with so many other people wanting to be guitar players for the rest of their lives...

YOUNG MAN

Have you ever thought of playing the guitar for your parents? They must've been very proud of you that you know how to play!

MELISSA

I actually did at one point, but I didn't think that one time was good enough.

YOUNG MAN

(tries to guess)

Why? Did they not like it? Did you mess up somewhere? Did you get nervous all the way through? String got broken?

MELISSA

Everything except for that last guess. In fact, I don't think I remember the last time I ever broke a guitar string. I've been playing this instrument ever since before I even attended middle school.

YOUNG MAN

Did anyone there liked your guitar-playing abilities?

MELISSA

Well, I think so, but in the end, no one really cares.

YOUNG MAN

Well maybe they should. How about this: What school year are you in right now?

MELISSA

Eleventh year high school?

YOUNG MAN

Well, that's still a lot of time to think about your future if you ask me!

MELISSA

What do you mean by that?

YOUNG MAN

After you attend high school, you can spend your entire life playing the guitar on one hand while finding a job that will help you make money on the other, until you can find some sort of record label that would accept you.

MELISSA

(realising this)

You know, that's not a bad idea. Maybe I'll take a job at an authentic Japanese restaurant while signing a deal with Warner Records, like Dua Lipa has...

YOUNG MAN

(unsure)

Are you sure you want to go through a route like that? I mean, first of all, something like Warner Records is hard to get to; I was thinking more of the independent record labels here in this country to start off. Second, if playing the guitar doesn't work, at least you've gotta have a high-paying job.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

I'm not so sure if working at an authentic Japanese restaurant sounds like a helpful idea, if you're aiming to be a waitress, but I think it's different for the cooks, and/or the owner, whichever one gets the most benefits...

MELISSA

I guess you're right. It's not my fault I'm stuck playing the guitar. I think it's the only thing I'm ever good at doing. I can't seem to do anything else useful in my life...

YOUNG MAN

Aw, don't think like that! There's gotta be something else you can do!

(MORE)

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

Think long and hard about what else you could be good at ---

MELISSA

No, really, playing the guitar is all that I can do. I can't imagine doing anything else in life that would surprise me: Sports? Dancing? Yoga, maybe? Who knows? But I can't possibly see myself doing any of those things...

YOUNG MAN

Are you sure about that? Is playing the guitar really the only thing you are able to do?

MELISSA

Yes, it is, and my mum keeps annoying me because of that!

MELISSA (CONT'D)

She keeps dominating my life just because we're an "Asian family," and that in "Asian families" the parents are supposed to shape up the lives of their kids so that they don't end up living in the streets or something like that. If it was a white family, it wouldn't make much of a difference...

YOUNG MAN

I was thinking you'd help me evaluate, not rant and complain. In all the times I have seen you out here, I have never seen you act that way in front of me before.

MELISSA

Yeah? It's not gonna be the only time either.

YOUNG MAN

Speaking of your mum, by the way, what does she do for a living?

MELISSA

She's a former figure skater, first British-Japanese to make it to the semi-finals at the Winter Olympic qualifiers.

YOUNG MAN

Wow! She must be really successful. Y'see that? If she can be successful, you can be successful too! Does she do anything on the side?

MELISSA

Yes, she's been a correspondent for Sky Sports ever since her retirement, and she has given a lot of press conferences about her ice-skating ---

YOUNG MAN

Now that is exactly what I'm talking about! See, you can learn a lot from your mother for a change. I know I haven't!

MELISSA

(prepares to leave)

Well, I gotta get going. I'm actually gonna talk to my mum about all of this anyway. I can already tell she's gonna call me out...

YOUNG MAN

I don't think she will, at least maybe not in a harsh way, hopefully.

MELISSA

Yeah, I doubt it.

YOUNG MAN

If you need me for anything, I'll be over at the University of Westminster paying off my college loans (and believe me, there are a lot!).

MELISSA

What do you study?

YOUNG MAN

I've actually wanted to do something with sports, but they said I can only do that with a Master's Degree, so I'm an undergraduate, and, between you and me, I'm undecided.

MELISSA

Undecided? Almost sounds like my position right now...

YOUNG MAN

Well, not unless you start aiming higher, KT Tunstall!

MELISSA

To be fair, she did way better than I did!

YOUNG MAN

We'll find out soon enough!

MELISSA somewhat smiles at him, like she's found a new friend.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

One more thing, I don't think I've ever really got your name...

MELISSA

Melissa Yamaguchi.

YOUNG MAN

(sticks his hand out)
Name's Michael. It's an honour.

MELISSA

(nearly hesitatingly
shakes his hand)
Pleased to meet you.

INT. MELISSA'S HOME, FOYER - DAY

MELISSA enters through her front door, announcing "I'm home" in Japanese before heading to her room.

Her little brother, TARO, confronts her as she walks by.

TARO

Onee-chan, let's play Sega!

NOTE: "Onee-chan" means "big sister" in Japanese.

MELISSA

Not now.

Next to confront MELISSA is her mother, KAOKO.

KAOKO

Melissa-chan! There you are! I've just talked to your father on the phone and he said that we can use whatever is left of our last week bonus to spend it at the most fanciest restaurant in all of London! Isn't that exciting?

MELISSA

(less than interested)
Um, yes... it is...

KAOKO

(in Japanese)
What's the matter, Melissa?
(in English)
Aren't you happy you don't have to eat my famous Katsudon recipe for the fifty-second time? It was, though, your all-time favourite, but you know how everyone gets tired of the same old things...

MELISSA

Okaa-san...

NOTE: "Okaa-san" means "mother" in Japanese.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Do you ever have the feeling we're one of the only Japanese living in the UK?

KAOKO

Hm, other than our aunts and uncles and Sonoya Mizuno, I really don't know. I never actually managed to look up the statistics on that. Why?

MELISSA

That's what I thought...

MELISSA (CONT'D)

(briefly hesitates)
Oh, and one more thing: Remember when you said to me that I can never make my life out of playing the guitar?

KAOKO

Go on...

MELISSA

Well, what if, when I get out of high school, I decide to play the guitar on one hand while I find a job that will help me make money on the other? What do you think about that?

KAOKO

Well, the thing is, Melissa-chan, you say you want to find a job that will help you make money, but the thing is what kind of job?

MELISSA

Well, any job! I can take anything, maybe not at an authentic Japanese restaurant, depending on the job and pay, but still! Anything!

KAOKO

Melissa-chan, I understand how much you love playing the guitar, but you're near the end of your high school years. It's time you start thinking about what you really want to be when you grow up. Make sure you can find a career that will help you support yourself financially. You can't just pick any job in the workforce and expect to make money out of it; like, you can't just say "I wanna be a guitar player," "I wanna be a guitar player" and find out how successful you're expecting yourself to be!

KAOKO (CONT'D)

No one can be perfect with just one or two songs, I know that. You've got to be realistic here; That's why we keep having these talks. I want to make sure you have a good career and lead a happy life, like your father for instance, who works at PricewaterhouseCoopers and is making a ton of money right now as a result.

MELISSA

Does he end up being happy?

KAOKO

Why, of course! He's earned enough money to help support our family; He's earned enough money to spend on all of the things that he likes; Where wouldn't he be without money by his side?

MELISSA

There is no way I'm answering that question! What about you and Sky Sports?

KAOKO

Well, that's another story. I made my life out of figure skating while I was attending high school like you are, and years later I was chosen by Sky Sports to be one of their correspondents. I didn't actually apply there, though; They just came up and asked me because I was a well-known figure skater.

MELISSA

That makes sense.

KAOKO

You wanna take part in figure skating? I mean, it's not like it's gonna be worth it and all, but if you can be as good as I am and make a ton of money by winning in tournaments, it's not too late to think about it...

MELISSA

(unsure)

Oh, I don't know. It seems too hard

KAOKO

Well, it will be hard if you wait until later! How about I give you a few ice-skating lessons and see what you think about it. I can be your teacher. Come on now, what's the sense in not trying? Remember what I told you: It's better to try and slip up than never to try at all!

MELISSA
(doesn't seem interested)
I'll just give it some thought.

KAOKO
Okay, if you insist. But remember,
if you're just not gonna take your
future seriously and spend the rest
of your life playing the guitar
when it's not gonna help you, it's
off to Cambridge you go!

MELISSA
I thought it was Oxford...

KAOKO
Imperial!

MELISSA
Edinburgh!

KAOKO
Manchester!

MELISSA
Birmingham!

KAOKO
Liverpool!

MELISSA
Middlesex!

KAOKO
Oh, so now you're a girl and a
boy?!

MELISSA
Ugh!

MELISSA enters her room and closes the door.

INT. MELISSA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MELISSA puts her stuff away and dives down on her bed. From
the other side, we can hear KAOKO giving a Japanese rant.

She hears a vibrating sound coming from her phone. She takes
it out to see that her boyfriend JOEL has sent her a text
message. She replies. After seconds on her phone, she puts it
away and stares down on her bed hopelessly.

INT. MELISSA'S HIGH SCHOOL, MAIN CAMPUS - THE NEXT DAY

During interval time, MELISSA is struggling to come up with an idea for a new song. It seems as if she can't get anything done.

She hears her friend JANET calling out her name. She and two other girls, OLIVIA and EVE, approach MELISSA.

JANET

How are you feeling?

MELISSA

Oh, I don't know...

JANET

Still writing another song?

MELISSA

Well, I was, then I thought, I don't know, maybe playing the guitar for the rest of my life isn't the best thing for me and that maybe I should do something else for a change. My mum doesn't think I'm gonna be good enough...

OLIVIA

(encouraging)

Aw, don't think like that! You're gonna be fine! You've played for us a couple of times before and we thought you were great, and if we think you're great, everyone else here's gonna think you're great!

MELISSA

(realising)

Y'know, that's kind of the same thing someone else told me the other day, if only I remembered what he said...

OLIVIA

Well, it looks like we're not the only ones cheering you on, then!

EVE

Yeah, Melissa, we believe in you!

MELISSA

If that has to do with finding better career options, then yeah.

OLIVIA

Well, you've got a lot of time for that! All of us do; After all, we're only in high school!

JANET

Yeah! When I get out of high school, I thought of working as a fashion designer like my mum, but that's just an excuse I kept using. Now I join the Drama Club so I can be as talented as you, Melissa.

EVE

I thought I wanted to be a nurse. Everyone else was doing it, so I thought, why not?

OLIVIA

And then what happened?

EVE

My parents talked me out of it. It's usually always good to follow their advice...

SOME STUDENT

You can be a veterinarian instead! It is where a lot of women apply, but it's not much. At least you can get over your fear of snakes just as long as they don't bite you in the rear!

OLIVIA

Hey, screw you jerk!!!

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

What a bastard! He cares less about other people than he does for himself! No wonder everyone hates him so much...

MELISSA'S boyfriend JOEL enters.

JOEL

Hey Melissa!

MELISSA

(surprised, blushing)

Ah, Joel! I should've known you'd be here...

JOEL

Yeah, I just thought I'd drop on by and see how you're doing.

MELISSA

(somewhat nervous)

I'm doing fine actually. There's not much going on around here, but you know. It's not like I'm writing a new song or anything...

MELISSA'S friends wonder if she's doing alright.

JOEL

Say, I was wondering if you'd like to go out tonight.

MELISSA

Go out? But where exactly?

JOEL

I don't know. Where would you like to go? I know we've been to almost everywhere up to this point. There really isn't much places to go.

MELISSA

Yeah, living in a big city like London does have its problems. I don't think I've given it any thought. Um...

(to JANET)

You got any ideas, Janet?

(notices she's not there)

Janet?

She notices her friends hiding comically at an area giggling at her.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

(unamused)

Oh, you guys!!!

JOEL

Actually, it's okay if you don't want to go now. We can always go next week if you don't have any other plans.

MELISSA

No, I don't. Other than my guitar lessons and homework, I don't think I have anything else going on right now...

(MORE)

MELISSA (CONT'D)

(realises)

You know, that reminds me; I want to ask you: Do you think my life would be any better if I didn't play the guitar?

JOEL

Why would I think that? I think you're a great guitar player!

MELISSA

You really think so?

JOEL

Yeah! You've played for me a couple of times, and I thought you had a really great singing voice. I just wish I could do something like that...

MELISSA

It takes time, doesn't it. I think it's usually best if you started off younger.

JOEL

Yeah. I still don't even know if I want to be a football player or a rugby player, but don't get me started on the whole compare and contrast thing!

MELISSA

You mean on terminology? I don't think I have any jokes for that! Remind me again what soccer is!

The two of them giggle briefly.

JOEL

You know, I'm not entirely sure, but I think there's one place we haven't gone to yet...

MELISSA and her friends wonder what he's talking about as we transition to ---

INT. OR EXT. ICE-SKATING RINK IN LONDON - NIGHT

MELISSA

You're taking me ice-skating?

JOEL

Yeah, why not? You told me your mum was a great figure skater, so I thought maybe I'd take you to an ice-skating rink!

MELISSA and JOEL are standing just outside of the rink, the former giving hesitation.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Why? You don't like it?

MELISSA struggles to come up with an answer.

JOEL (CONT'D)

(concerned)

Are you nervous?

MELISSA

Nervous? Me nervous?! Oh, no! I'm not nervous! Why would I be nervous?!

She tries to back out awkwardly. JOEL gives an "Is she alright?" expression before MELISSA quickly admits...

MELISSA (CONT'D)

... Okay, I'm nervous.

JOEL

It's alright. Not everyone gets it on the first try. You can't expect to be a "perfect" ice skater in one day ---

MELISSA

No, it's not that. It's just...

She tries to come up with a better explanation.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

... When I see an ice-skating rink like this, I always thought of how my mum used to be a great figure skater when she was growing up. Every time I see a floor of ice, I kept imagining how my mum would do those crazy stunts when she was figure skating.

(MORE)

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Yesterday at home, she asked me if I wanted to be a figure skater just like her even though I thought it was gonna be hard, but looking at this now, I think to myself: Can I really ever be a figure skater just like her? Do I even have what it takes to do it? I always doubt that I would, but now that we're here, I don't know if I want to find out for myself...

JOEL

So you're telling me you thought you wanted be a figure skater like your mum, but you also say that you thought your life would be better off if you didn't play the guitar. So, which one is it gonna be? I'm confused.

MELISSA

I don't know; I always end up finding time to write music and play the guitar! Nothing else seems to matter to me! In fact, I think that's the only thing I'm ever good at in my life.

JOEL

(cheers her up)

Now don't say that! I think learning how to ice skate is great for you. You still wanna go? It's okay if you don't want to. We can always try something else ---

MELISSA

No no no, it's fine, it's fine. I don't mind. I'm just gonna see how this ice-skating thing works... Shall we go?

JOEL

Yeah, let's go.

MELISSA and JOEL put on their ice skates and slowly make their way onto the ice.

MELISSA

Have you actually done this before?

JOEL

Second time, actually. Some
YouTuber taught me all that she
knows!

JOEL teaches MELISSA some ice-skating basics. MELISSA nearly slips and falls on the ice before JOEL quickly comes up to catch her.

JOEL teaches MELISSA a variety of ice-skating techniques to the best of his ability. MELISSA practises slowly at first before gradually picking on, JOEL monitoring her in the process. MELISSA then starts to grow confidence as she ice-skates. JOEL warns her not to overdo herself, but MELISSA leaves off a variety of "That is too easy!"-like expressions.

For the rest of the evening, MELISSA continues to hone her craft (even if she performs some of the more advanced moves) and JOEL looks back on any tutorial videos he found as references. All at the same time, the two of them appear to have a really great time on the ice together, while JOEL becomes amazed at MELISSA'S ice-skating abilities.

Finally, the two of them begin to skate on the ice together.

INT. MELISSA'S HOME, TARO'S ROOM - NIGHT

TARO does his homework as his mother KAOKO asks him...

KAOKO

Taro-chan, have you seen Melissa-
chan anywhere?

TARO

Oh, she told me she went ice-
skating with her boyfriend.

KAOKO

Ice-skating?

INT. OR EXT. ICE SKATING RINK IN LONDON - NIGHT

MELISSA and JOEL continue to have fun on the ice. Just before closing time, KAOKO shows up to see what the two are up to. Finding them on ice, she thinks Aw, look at them having fun together! before witnessing her daughter perform a figure skating technique that leaves her entirely speechless.

MELISSA continues to skate gracefully on the ice when she notices her surprised mother standing outside of the rink. Surprised herself she's even there in the first place, MELISSA gives out a "Mum?!" before ---

BAM! She crashes into a wall.

CUT TO:

Blank. An unconscious MELISSA wakes up outside of the rink with a worried JOEL and KAOKO standing in front of her. The area is ready to close for the night. KAOKO sighs in relief, saying to herself "Thank God!"

MELISSA

... Oh, my head! Can anyone get me the name, address, and phone number of that wall?

JOEL

Hey, are you alright?

MELISSA

I think so... Maybe I should've looked before I slammed right into that wall...

JOEL

Oh, that's alright. At least you didn't get hurt. Say, you've got some amazing moves out there.

MELISSA

I do?

KAOKO

(excitedly)

Yes yes yes! I can't believe it! My daughter is an ice-skater!

(addresses whatever figure skating technique

MELISSA just did)

That's exactly what I did when I was young!

MELISSA

... Okaa-san?! What are you doing here?!

KAOKO

Well, I was wondering where you were, and then your little brother told me you were ice-skating, and I was like "Melissa ice-skating?" because before you said it was gonna be hard, and then I see you at this ice-skating rink with Joel and I thought you two were just spending time together, and then I see you perform this amazing figure skating technique and I was like "WHAAAT?!?" and the next thing I know you're on the ice like you're the next Rika Kihira or Kaori Sakamoto or Evgenia Medvedeva or Alina Zagitova or whatever, even though I haven't seen those last two as much anymore! I mean, do you know how much effort it takes to do something like that? Like, how did you do it?

KAOKO is too excited to speak, continuing to go on and on with her words, with MELISSA and JOEL already becoming lost.

MELISSA

(interrupts)

Okaa-san?

KAOKO

Huh?

MELISSA

I think you said plenty.

KAOKO

(realises)

Oh, sorry, I, uh, I got carried away a little bit, didn't I?

MELISSA

Yeah, you did.

KAOKO

How did you do all of those moves?

MELISSA

I don't know. I ---

MELISSA (CONT'D)

(thinks about it)

I really don't know, actually.

(MORE)

MELISSA (CONT'D)

I think it was just me using my instinct, that's all.

JOEL

Melissa, I may be wrong but I think you learned those moves from your mum.

MELISSA

No, I didn't. Did I?

KAOKO

He's right! You have my figure skating blood! I would be happy to teach you everything that I know! Why, I've been a figure skater from high school until I was thirty!

JOEL

(to MELISSA)

Yeah, why not, Melissa? You even said so yourself.

MELISSA

I did?

JOEL

Yeah, you wondered if you really had what it takes to be a figure skater like your mum, and I think you already proved just that.

MELISSA

Is it too late to take back what I said?

KAOKO

Come on, Melissa-chan! You can't leave all of those moves to waste!

MELISSA

Look, I already did all of those moves once, but now I doubt I ever want to do them again.

JOEL

Is it because of that wall crash?

MELISSA

Say what? Wall crash?! Oh no, don't be ridiculous!... Maybe.

KAOKO

Melissa-chan, because of what I have seen from you on the ice rink, I think you have just what it takes to be a figure skater like me. How would you like for me to give you some figure skating lessons?

MELISSA

(confused)

A what was that?

KAOKO

I'm going to make you a professional figure skater! What do you say to that?

MELISSA

... I think I'm gonna go and slam into that wall again.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT IN LONDON - THE FOLLOWING NIGHT

A lively expensive restaurant. From here, we immediately transition to MELISSA, her little brother TARO, her mother KAOKO, and her father YU'ICHI, sitting at a table eating their meal.

KAOKO and YU'ICHI talk in Japanese.

YU'ICHI

A professional figure skater?

KAOKO

That's right! I'm going to teach her everything there is to know about figure skating. It's gonna be easy, you'll see.

YU'ICHI

(concerned)

Are you sure you want to teach our daughter figure skating? I heard those kinds of things cost a lot of money ---

KAOKO

Don't worry. I'll pay it off of my salary at Sky Sports. She doesn't have to pay anything...

While KAOKO and YU'ICHI continue talking, MELISSA thinks: By God, what did I get myself into? She doesn't even feel like eating or drinking.

TARO tries to open up a conversation with her.

TARO

Hey, have you ever noticed how some British media treats the Duchess of Cambridge differently than the now-former Duchess of Sussex? Do you think it's because those media are conservative and that they favour white women more than women who are half white and half black in the royal family?

MELISSA

(uninterested)

What does that have to do with anything?

TARO

(shut out)

I dunno. I just felt like I wanna talk to you, that's all. It's not my fault I'm a secondary character.

KAOKO gets MELISSA'S attention in English.

KAOKO

Melissa-chan, how about I sign you up for ballet classes so you can build up on your figure skating skills.

MELISSA

(confused)

Wait, you want me to take ballet classes? I'm sorry but how are ballet and figure skating the same thing?

KAOKO

Well, there are a lot of things that ballet and figure skating have in common! Just ask Nathan Chen! Ballet helps you work on your flexibility; it helps to keep your body balanced and your mind focused. It also helps you keep in sync with the music so that way you can plug that into figure skating much easier.

MELISSA

Do all figure skaters do that?

KAOKO

Well, maybe not all of them, but I know I have. It took me almost eight years from kindergarten to high school to get those ballet moves just right!

MELISSA

(realises)

So wait, you're telling me you could've been a ballet dancer this whole time?!

KAOKO

No no no, it's not like that at all! I actually couldn't decide whether to do either ballet dancing or figure skating, so I did both.

KAOKO (CONT'D)

Then, I thought figure skating was much more interesting, so I used everything I learned in ballet to apply it to figure skating, and that's how I won my first championship in Sheffield almost a year after leaving ballet.

MELISSA

It's no wonder you're a great figure skater.

KAOKO

That's right, and if I can do it, you can do it too! That's why I'm signing you up for ballet classes two times a week starting next Thursday, so you can have a gist of what it means to turn great ballet moves into great figure skating moves. I'll pay for all of your classes; You don't have to worry about anything.

MELISSA

Next Thursday? You mean Thursday and Friday, or Thursday and another day of the week?

KAOKO

I was leaning more on Thursday and Friday; that's when one of the ballet instructors is open.

MELISSA

(conflicted)

I'm not sure if I can make it on Fridays. You see, um ---

KAOKO

Let me guess: This is about Joel, isn't it?

MELISSA

(awkwardly)

Uh, no?

KAOKO

Don't worry about Joel; He'll be alright. The ballet lessons are only an hour and a half long, and ballet schools here don't close until five, so you've got a lot of time with Joel after that. Luckily, he's not your husband yet...

MELISSA

So what time does this ballet academy open?

KAOKO

They open at nine in the morning, but you have school on those days, so ---

MELISSA

(immediately)

That's easy! Just put them on the weekends! Simple as that!

KAOKO

(in Japanese)

Sorry, Melissa...

(in English)

... but I have already signed you up for Thursdays and Fridays after school as an unlimited member.

MELISSA

You what?

KAOKO

I got so excited after what I saw from you on the ice the other day that I kinda got carried away and signed you up the next morning. I really thought this would be a great opportunity for you.

KAOKO (CONT'D)

I mean, at least you learned something from your mum for a change, am I right?!

MELISSA

(dismayed)

Someone please kill me.

KAOKO

I'm sorry I didn't tell you sooner, sweetie. I guess I kinda rushed you through on all of this, didn't I?

TARO

Yeah, you really rushed her through, alright ---

KAOKO

(in Japanese)

Shut up, Taro.

TARO

Hai.

NOTE: "Hai" means "yes" in Japanese.

KAOKO

(in English, back to
MELISSA)

Being a figure skater by doing ballet takes a lot of time to get it right, like I said with what I had to go through. But the damage is already done. I said I was gonna pay £360 a month for you to take unlimited classes, so yeah, you've got no other choice.

YU'ICHI looks on with much concern as he and KAOKO talk in Japanese.

YU'ICHI

Hey, are you sure that we can afford all of those classes?

(MORE)

YU'ICHI (CONT'D)

That's not even a quarter of your salary ---

KAOKO

Stop worrying! I got this! At least when I'm coaching her, I don't have to pay her! Whatever happened with the money you made, huh?! Brought your favourite stuff yet?

YU'ICHI

Hey, my company had gone through a lot lately, and not just in the UK, so cut me some slack, alright?! I thought our daughter was supposed to have a good career at a good company ---

KAOKO

Yes, I know, but just give me a chance, please! I know she has potential! I can see it in her! She's going to be a great figure skater! Just let me find out for myself. Let me teach her everything that I know. This is what she was made to do! She's gonna make a lot of money out of this! Please!

YU'ICHI

(thinks it over)

I really don't know... that is, if that's what our daughter really wants to do...

MELISSA, after a moment of thinking about it herself, finally gives in...

MELISSA

Well, if this has anything to do with making money, I guess I'll go on the ice again...

KAOKO

(cheerfully)

(in Japanese)

Hooray!

(in English)

I knew you were gonna do it! I just knew it!

MELISSA

Just remind me who my ballet instructor is.

INT. BALLET ACADEMY IN LONDON, MAIN STUDIO - AFTERNOON

MELISSA is given a one-on-one ballet lesson from MIZUHA NAGATA, a top ballet instructor at the academy. MIZUHA has a demanding voice, calling out an uninterested MELISSA constantly.

MIZUHA
C'mon, don't go suspiria on me,
okay?

... we hear MIZUHA say at times.

At one point, MELISSA fails to get her reflexes together and falls to the ground.

MIZUHA (CONT'D)
(demanding)
C'mon, now, up up. If you want to
be a great ballet dancer, one must
have great reflexes ---

MELISSA
But I'm a figure skater ---

MIZUHA
I don't care. Now up up. Back to
your stretching.

... and with that, MIZUHA continues to instruct MELISSA on her ballet. MELISSA gives out a look on her face that says "Did I really ask for this?"

Later on, we see MIZUHA demonstrating MELISSA a ballet technique, and instructs her to do the same. After a few failed attempts, and some encouragement from MIZUHA, MELISSA pulls herself together, concentrates, and attempts to finally perform it...

INT. OR EXT. ICE SKATING RINK IN LONDON - AFTERNOON

... landing perfectly on the ice-skating floor and finishing with an amazing exit.

MELISSA has a one-on-one figure skating session with her coach, her mother KAOKO, in the same ice-skating rink where she and JOEL went out on their date. KAOKO coaches the same way MIZUHA has, resulting in a similar scenario compared to the ballet academy. Despite her mother's coaching, she cheers MELISSA on nonetheless.

Moments later, MELISSA approaches her mother.

KAOKO

You see? You see? I knew you were gonna do well!

MELISSA

(not seeming to care)
Yeah, I guess I did...

KAOKO

You do have my figure skating blood! I just know you will make money out of this! I just know it!

MELISSA

Mum, I fell a couple of times trying to do all of those hard jumps. You think I'm actually gonna make money out of that?!

KAOKO

Oh, quit being so negative! You just need a lot of practice, that's all. You'll get it in the next couple of weeks.

MELISSA

(rolling her eyes)
Obviously.

KAOKO

Now, we've got a lot of time before the rink closes. Anything else you want to do here?

MELISSA

Can I go home now?

A figure skater passes by, performing an amazing routine before we transition to ---

INT. MELISSA'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

A tired MELISSA enters her room and closes the door. She approaches her bed and lies on it. She stares aimlessly at the ceiling.

She picks up her acoustic guitar and starts playing, also singing in Japanese.

While this goes on, a MONTAGE plays as we go back and forth between her practising her figure skating and her ballet. She struggles in both at first, but manages to suck it up anyway.

In-between her practising, she is forced to do a variety of things to stay fit, eventually becoming bored in doing all of them.

She also tries to manage her time between figure skating/ballet and doing other things in her life. For example, we are taken to MELISSA'S high school in the afternoon, where she is just about to leave until her three friends, JANET, OLIVIA, and EVE, come up to her.

JANET

Melissa, you wanna go to the debate club with us? They're having a debate on whether or not Boris Johnson actually did stuff for our country ---

MELISSA

Sorry, I can't. I have a ballet session to get to. I'll catch up on you guys later. Tell me how it goes!

... and as MELISSA exits, her puzzled friends begin to say to each other...

JANET

Wait, what did she say?

EVE

Ballet?

OLIVIA

All I gotta say is she's going places.

A BEAT before...

EVE

I ripped a snake in half yesterday.

OLIVIA

(to EVE)

A what?

MELISSA hurriedly passes by JOEL, who was just about to tell her something, though she is too quick for him to tell her.

We also see MELISSA enter her room after every session, lying on her bed and staring into space. She looks at her guitar and wonders whether or not she feels like playing.

The last item in the MONTAGE is MELISSA at the same ice-skating rink she had been using for all of her sessions.

She prepares to figure skate, warming up before performing a routine based on everything she has learned, with a hint of ballet in between. She appears confident.

KAOKO watches from a distance. She looks at her phone for information about a figure skating trials event and knows that MELISSA will do well.

EXT. STREET IN LONDON - DAY

We end the MONTAGE with MELISSA finishing her song at an area of London. Once again, she gives an "It's hopeless" expression before hearing the sound of someone applauding her. It happens to be MICHAEL. He awkwardly stops as soon as MELISSA notices him.

MICHAEL

Am I doing something wrong?

MELISSA

Oh no, you're not. You're not. I was just about finished playing guitar for the day ---

(quickly realises)

Wait a minute, haven't we met before?

MICHAEL

Not really... I mean, yes, no, yes, no, D'oh! What am I saying?!
Melissa Yamaguchi, is that right?

MELISSA nods "Yes..."

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Name's Michael, in case you don't remember.

MELISSA

Michael, huh...

MICHAEL

It's okay if you don't remember right now. You're probably gonna forget who I am again anyway after this ---

MELISSA

Okay, I think I remember. It is you.

MICHAEL

That's right, the only other
Michael in here whose last name
isn't Palin!

MELISSA

Yeah. Sorry, it's been a while ---

MICHAEL

Aw, that's alright. I know you've
been busy lately... that is if you
are busy. So, how's everything
doing?

MELISSA

I'm not so sure...

MICHAEL

Have you thought about how you want
to make money yet?

MELISSA

I guess so...

MICHAEL

(curious)

Really? What is it? It's okay if
you don't want to tell me now. I
just thought I'd like to get to
know you more if you told me ---

MELISSA

I am becoming a professional figure
skater.

MICHAEL

(amazed)

You are? Wow! You must really start
to be like your mother!

MELISSA

Look, it's not like I want to be
like my mum. It's just somehow I
got pulled into it, that's all.

MICHAEL

Are you sure about that? Because I
hope you made that choice of
becoming a professional figure
skater yourself.

MELISSA

If I told you about it, you'll
never get it.

(MORE)

MELISSA (CONT'D)

But it's true, I am going to be a professional figure skater as my career. My mum's suggestion.

MICHAEL

So this is all your mum's idea, huh? Well, that's alright. I've had full confidence in you since the first time we met. You shouldn't feel so bad you're becoming a professional figure skater. At least that's how I know you're gonna make money, I think. You know, I'm just curious: How does a professional figure skater make money anyway?

MELISSA

Well, you see, to put it simple, it's not just putting on a pair of ice skates, getting on the ice floor, and doing figure skating techniques no one else can pull off. You also have to learn to impress everyone who's watching you. It is, in a way, like Britain's Got Talent, except that you're not singing or doing whatever crazy stuff they do on the show; just going out there on the ice and doing a little dance, if you want to put it that way...

JOEL humorously scares MELISSA.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Shit! Can you stop that, please!

MICHAEL comes up to JOEL as they shake hands and greet each other.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

You two know each other?

MICHAEL

Why, yes! I'm actually his sports mentor. He wants to become a football player, so...

JOEL

Yeah, I couldn't decide if I was gonna be a football player or a rugby player, so I flipped a coin.

MELISSA

Well, that's a more obvious way of doing it.

MICHAEL

You see, Joel wants to become a professional football player for Chelsea, or something like that. Now, Chelsea is a really successful football club, and the players there make around, about £20,000 to £150,000 a week, last time I checked.

(to JOEL)

Is that right?

JOEL

Uh, yeah, I guess so. I think the numbers change every year. I'll have to look it up myself.

MELISSA

Yeah, but what does that have to do with me?

MICHAEL

It means you two definitely have a lot in common now, don't you? Think about it: You both want to play sports so that you can make money, and by the way, do you two actually know each other?

JOEL

Of course. I'm her boyfriend.

MELISSA

(somewhat embarrassed)

Joel, shut up!

MICHAEL

Well, how about that! They do have something in common after all!

JOEL

(to MELISSA)

So, Melissa, are you ready for the new school year?

MELISSA

Oh, um, yes! Yes! I'm ready! Almost wanted to forget about that! Why wouldn't I be ready?!

JOEL
You don't sound like it.

MELISSA
Well, you don't sound like it
either!

JOEL
Yes, I do!

As MELISSA and JOEL continue to argue, MICHAEL says to
himself...

MICHAEL
Contradicting: the first step to a
perfect romance...

MELISSA
Will you shut up?!

MELISSA then notices her phone ringing.

MICHAEL
Your phone's ringing!

MELISSA
I know that!

She picks it up and answers.

MELISSA (CONT'D)
... Hello?
(beat)
... Uh-huh...
(beat)
... Mm-hm...
(beat)
... Alright, I will... Bye...

MELISSA hangs up.

MELISSA (CONT'D)
It's my mum. She wants me to be at
the ice-skating rink.

JOEL
When does she want you there?

MELISSA
Like now!

MELISSA packs up her guitar and gets ready to leave.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

I gotta go, Michael. I have another figure skating session waiting for me.

MICHAEL

Another figure skating session, huh? Say, you don't mind if I watch you figure skate, don't you, just to see what it's like?

MELISSA

Don't you have other things to do? I was hoping you'd decide on your university major.

MICHAEL

Wait, I was supposed to do that?

MELISSA

You don't remember what you said about your major, do you?

MICHAEL

Nope, I actually forgot about it. What did I say I wanted to do? Did I actually say I wanted to take part in sports? I really thought I said I wanted to take part in cooking... Or was it acting?... How about business administration?
(rambles on)

JOEL

He either likes to forget or he's just trying to be funny...

MELISSA

(annoyingly)

Okay, fine, you can come along.

JOEL

Hey, what about me? Do you want me to come along too?

MELISSA

Yeah, sure, whatever. What can go wrong?

MICHAEL

Uh, anything?

MELISSA

Michael, stop being funny.

All three of them exit.

INT. OR EXT. ICE SKATING RINK IN LONDON - DAY

MELISSA is in the middle of another one-on-one figure skating session with KAOKO. MICHAEL and JOEL are surprised with each move MELISSA does on the ice.

JOEL

She's amazing, isn't she?

MICHAEL

Yep, she sure is...

(to MELISSA)

You really are following in your mum's footsteps, aren't you?

Afterwards, MELISSA approaches her mother, JOEL, and MICHAEL as they compliment her.

KAOKO

(in Japanese)

Good work, Melissa!

JOEL

That was awesome!

MICHAEL

See? I told you there'd be another thing you'd be good at!

JOEL

You know, you've done a lot more figure skating than the first time I saw you on the ice. I mean, you've changed a lot!

KAOKO

That's right; She's learned from the best (which happens to be me, by the way). Now she has what it takes to qualify for the annual figure skating championship in Sheffield.

MELISSA

(suddenly confused)

(in Japanese)

Wait...

(in English)

... Figure skating championship?
What do you mean by that?!

KAOKO

I don't think I've told you this yet, but every year there is this figure skating championship which is supposed to be the equivalent of an Olympic qualifiers or the World Figure Skating Championships or something like that. Last year, it was held in Nottingham, and this year it's gonna be held in Sheffield, so ---

MICHAEL

Excuse me, ma'am, I don't mean to interrupt, but this doesn't happen to be the one where the figure skating trials will be held here in London, is it?

KAOKO

Actually, it is. It's the first one ever held in London in years.

MICHAEL

Now that you mention it, I'm actually an intern there.

MELISSA, KAOKO, and JOEL are all surprised by this.

KAOKO

You are?

MELISSA

You're kidding! I thought you were still undecided!

MICHAEL

Okay, so maybe I acted like an idiot in front of you earlier, but it just came back to me; I did wanted to major in sports! Anyway, haven't you ever heard of the Alexandra Palace Ice Rink where the trials are gonna be held? I was told that I would be more likely to apply for a job if I had an internship there. I actually start when the event is held.

KAOKO

Wow, that's very nice; And who the hell are you supposed to be?

MICHAEL

Name's Michael. Melissa knows me.

MELISSA

Yeah, let's just say he's a total stranger for now.

MICHAEL

No, I'm not! We talked to each other twice!

KAOKO

(interrupting)

Excuse me, this is a conversation between me and my daughter. You stay out of this, stranger.

MICHAEL

You're bleeding kidding me!

MELISSA

(to KAOKO)

So, do you know when the event's gonna be held?

KAOKO

It's actually held all next week, but for some reason, all of the ladies' events are held first, so I already signed you up for Monday and ---

MELISSA

(displeased)

Monday?! You didn't tell me I was gonna go on Monday! In fact, you didn't tell me about any of this! I'm not even ready! You know the first day of school is also that day!

JOEL

I think she's right; We're getting close to that day every minute!

KAOKO

I've already contacted the school, and they said it was okay for you to be absent that day for the trials event.

MELISSA

You know, I can't believe school officials are that stupid just for falling for that! But still, I'm not even ready! I don't have that level of expertise to take part! You've only taught me so little! It's like you're expecting me to be perfect after only a few months! Haven't you seen those other figure skaters who take years and years just to be perfect?! I'm not one of those people!

KAOKO

Now, don't say that! You've got to learn to challenge yourself.

MELISSA

You know you could've said the same thing about my guitar playing.

KAOKO

Well, that's different! This is figure skating we're talking about here, something I made money out of and I know you would too! I can make you a great figure skater; I just know it! Worry about your guitar playing another time. Just give this trials event a chance and see what you think!

MELISSA

And here you are saying it wasn't worth it at first...

KAOKO

Melissa, please. There are times when it is worth it and there are times when it is not worth it. This is one of those times when it's worth it! Just please think about taking part, or else it's gonna take me a long while before I have your name written off the list.

MELISSA

If you're gonna take my name off the list, good luck with that. I'm going back to practice...

... and with that, she leaves her mother's presence.

KAOKO, JOEL, and MICHAEL watch over her as...

JOEL

I don't think she took it well...

MICHAEL

And I thought she'd be an overnight success with her guitar playing.

JOEL

Yeah, me too.

MICHAEL

(to KAOKO)

I want to ask you something, ma'am: How do you know if you think your daughter is not going to make money out of playing the guitar so quickly? Have you even played the guitar yourself? I mean, I don't want to sound disrespectful or anything, but ---

KAOKO

I've actually asked myself that same question. All I can say is I just don't know anymore. It kind of worries me how much my daughter has grown. I know she wants to act independent and follow her own path, but sometimes I wish she would just listen to me and appreciate that everything I do for her is for her own good. I really want my daughter to have what's best for her, but I can't even convince her to take part in the trials without having her complain about her school schedule for the new year. I really just don't understand that girl anymore...

MELISSA continues to figure skate as KAOKO speaks before we transition to ---

INT. BALLET ACADEMY IN LONDON, MAIN STUDIO - AFTERNOON

MELISSA takes part in another one-on-one ballet session with MIZUHA. She begins to feel disillusioned.

MIZUHA

Very good. Now I shall teach you a more advanced technique...

She introduces MELISSA to the technique before MELISSA realises...

MELISSA

Do you ever feel like I didn't ask for any of this?

MIZUHA

A what?

MELISSA

(struggles to come up with words)

I'm sorry, I don't mean to be disrespectful, but I don't feel like I have a real purpose in being here anymore. The only reason I ever took part in this is because I was told I could correlate all of this into figure skating later on. I mean, I'm not saying figure skating is better than ballet or anything. I don't know why, but every time I take part in a ballet session with you, my mind feels all "blank" somehow, you know what I'm saying?

MELISSA

I feel like I've become more of a ballet dancer than a figure skater, which is what my mum actually wants me to be. I don't know if I can have it both ways. I know some people have, but I don't know if I can. I know my mum is paying for me to take these lessons, and you've taught me a lot I need to know even though I'm going to forget later on, and I thank you for that, but I take ballet lessons day after day, and for what?! I just find this to be all meaningless somehow. I don't know if I find any worth doing all of this anymore, like this has become a huge obstacle for me. Does that make any sense to you at all?

Appalled by this, MIZUHA approaches MELISSA and slaps her hard across the face. She gives her a fierce look.

MIZUHA

How dare you. Do you even know what your mother said to me about you?!

(MORE)

MIZUHA (CONT'D)

She thought you were open to new things. She was so proud of you with those figure skating techniques of yours she signed you up for these classes to help you work on your craft. I don't give a damn if you're a figure skater or a ballet dancer; She brought you here so your body can shape up, and now you're telling me you're taking ballet lessons for granted?! You think this is just about figure skating?!? Do you actually think there are any figure skaters out there who don't know how to take their bodies seriously?!? That's why they take ballet!!! They focus on their body and their mind so that when they go on the ice, they don't have to be taught the same things!!! They know what to do already!!! Their mind feels confident, their body feels flexible; What part of that are you not taught?!?

MELISSA

(lost on words)

... I --- I ---

A now pissed-off MIZUHA tosses MELISSA her belongings and points her to the exit.

MIZUHA

Actually, don't, okay?! Don't!!! That is the last time I am ever allowing this!!! Take your shit and get the fuck out of my studio!!!

MELISSA stands there motionless, hesitant, fear induced all over her face.

MIZUHA (CONT'D)

Did you not hear what I said?

(beat)

Go... NOW, BITCH!!!

INT. BALLET ACADEMY IN LONDON, MAIN HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

MELISSA storms out of MIZUHA'S ballet studio, holding back tears. Wanting to release her anger and cry, she holds it in and walks toward the exit. She stares at a wall and attempts to kick it but hesitates.

By the time she opens the exit doors, we immediately transition to ---

INT. ALEXANDRA PALACE ICE RINK, MAIN AREA - NIGHT

MELISSA and her mother KAOKO arrive for the figure skating trials. They find that they are in the middle of a female figure skater's routine.

They notice MICHAEL approaching them.

MICHAEL

There you are, you two! As soon as she's done over there, you're part of the last group to go for the day. Melissa, you're the last one up.

KAOKO

Thanks, Michael. We came here as soon as we could.

MICHAEL

Now, do you have your information ready so I can send it to the officials?

KAOKO

Yes, let me see...

While KAOKO looks in her bag for the papers, MELISSA suddenly realises...

MELISSA

Wait a minute, I'm last? Okay, hold on for just one moment: If this is night, and I'm the last one up, you mean I could've been at school this whole time?!

KAOKO

But you needed that time to practise! If I just let you go to school and then do a figure skating session after, your body would not be ready! I know because I've gone through this before!

MELISSA

Isn't there such a thing as being too soon? My body is fine!

After handing MICHAEL the papers, KAOKO immediately says...

KAOKO

No, it's not! If you make a mistake out there, you're gonna be penalised for it! We spent an entire day getting you ready; That's why I had you skip school! Think I'm overworking you?! I'm not, so why can't you just appreciate the fact that I'm helping you?!

MELISSA

You know, sometimes I can't even tell if I should just drop out of high school or forget about being a figure skater, because this is getting pointless ---

KAOKO

Melissa, do you want to have this argument with me now?!

MICHAEL

She's right you know. We don't have time for this, now come on. I'll show you to the locker and changing rooms...

... and with that, they exit while the audience applauds for the figure skater that just went.

INT. ALEXANDRA PALACE ICE RINK, LOCKER AND CHANGING ROOMS - CONTINUOUS

MELISSA and KAOKO arrive inside to see a handful amount of girls out and about.

MELISSA

So, this is where I get dressed?

KAOKO

Yes, I suppose it is.

Without a moment to spare, KAOKO begins to head off.

KAOKO (CONT'D)

I'll be out there if you need me. Just make sure you get ready in a few minutes.

MELISSA

I will.

KAOKO
(in Japanese)
I love you, sweetheart.

As KAOKO exits...

MELISSA
(sighs)
This film is getting more
unrealistic by the minute...

... MELISSA finds an area to sit and gets changed.

A girl sitting next to her notices MELISSA and tries to open up a conversation with her. Her name is AMANDA.

AMANDA
Excuse me, you must be Melissa
Yamaguchi, is that right?

MELISSA
Yes, but how did you know my name?

AMANDA
My name's Amanda. We're in the same
group together.

MELISSA
I see...

AMANDA
Is this your first time here?

MELISSA
Actually, yes it is...

AMANDA
Oh wow! So how long have you been
figure skating before then?

MELISSA
(in a "so-so" expression)
A couple of months. My mum is one
of the greatest figure skaters in
all of the UK, and she wanted me to
be just like her when I grow up,
even though I didn't ask for any of
this, so yeah. She's been my coach
every day after school, and that's
how I ended up here.

AMANDA

Yes, I've heard about your mum. I heard she was the first British-Japanese figure skater to make it to the Winter Olympics long before we were even born ---

MELISSA

Actually, she only made it through the qualifiers. She didn't make the team, unfortunately.

AMANDA

Oh, I'm sorry to hear about that, but I hope she's doing okay. You know, I remember the first time I took part in a qualifiers event. The judges called me out because my song selection didn't fit well with my figure skating techniques, but don't worry! I have a better song selection this time! It's not like I'm gonna get pulled over because I had Ed Sheeran play in full blast while I do my camel spins, no! "Perfect" is fine, but "Shape of You?!" Ugh! Save that for the pairs, am I right?!

MELISSA thinks to herself *She seems very friendly...* as AMANDA talks.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

So, are you attending high school or something?

MELISSA

Yes, I'm in my eleventh year.

AMANDA

Wow, what a great time to start thinking about figure skating! I've actually been doing this since my first day of high school, and my parents support me so much they spent all that they could just to get my feet on the ice floor, but I've had so much going on in my life that I never had the chance to just go out there and ---

While AMANDA speaks, MELISSA notices a girl sitting far away. She is Japanese just like her.

MELISSA
 (interrupts)
 I wonder who that girl is over
 there...

AMANDA
 (takes notice)
 Oh, that's, I think it's Hiroko
 Nakata, did I say her name right?
 The one who goes before you do. I
 don't think she talks much. I think
 she can only speak Japanese; Do you
 think you know how to talk to her?

MELISSA
 Well, I'll try, but I don't know if
 I'm gonna like it...

MELISSA tries to approach HIROKO and talk to her, HIROKO
 acting like she has no interest. A nervous MELISSA makes her
 first move...

MELISSA (CONT'D)
 (in Japanese)
 Um...

No response.

MELISSA (CONT'D)
 (in Japanese)
 I am Melissa Yamaguchi...

Still no response.

MELISSA (CONT'D)
 (in Japanese)
 Are you from Japan ---

HIROKO
 (in Japanese)
 Don't expect for this to be a fair
 fight.

That hit MELISSA pretty quick. She remains perplexed by this
 before...

AMANDA
 Something wrong?

MELISSA
 (snapping out of it)
 Oh no, no. I'm fine. I'm fine.
 Thank you...

Then, their cue arrives. MELISSA, AMANDA, HIROKO, and three other girls grab their ice skates and prepare to head out to the ice rink for the final event.

INT. ALEXANDRA PALACE ICE RINK, MAIN AREA - CONTINUOUS

The six girls arrive and wait for their cue to step on the ice. Even as KAOKO and MICHAEL cheer MELISSA on, she still develops an uneasy feeling inside her.

Their cue arrives. The six girls enter the ice, assembling at the centre to greet the audience, introduced one by one, including a fake-smiling MELISSA, much to KAOKO'S notice.

Then, they begin to warm up.

AMANDA appears carefree, HIROKO looks like she doesn't give a shit, and MELISSA tries to act natural, but ends up nervous. MIZUHA'S words cause her to lose concentration and bump into one of the girls.

The final portion of the ladies' qualifiers begins. Five of the girls exit and wait by the side-lines for their turn, including a focus-losing MELISSA. The remaining girl on the ice, meanwhile, begins her routine.

EXT. OBSERVATION WHEEL - NIGHT

Under a large observation wheel, JOEL tries to make a phone call to MELISSA. He waits for a response...

INT. ALEXANDRA PALACE ICE RINK, MAIN AREA - CONTINUOUS

... while at the same time, MELISSA'S phone vibrates inside her bag, in the possession of KAOKO, who appears to be too busy watching the ladies' qualifiers to notice.

EXT. OBSERVATION WHEEL - CONTINUOUS

After seconds of no response, JOEL hangs up and checks his phone. He makes a sudden realisation.

JOEL

Oh, that's right; The qualifiers
are tonight.

He puts his phone away and watches time pass him by.

INT. ALEXANDRA PALACE ICE RINK, MAIN AREA - NIGHT

Three girls down, three to go; AMANDA, HIROKO, and MELISSA are those three (in order).

AMANDA'S cue arrives. She says to MELISSA...

AMANDA

Wish me luck!

... before entering the ice. After the third girl receives her score from the kiss and cry booth, AMANDA is mentored by her coach before she reaches the centre of the ice and begins her routine.

She performs an energetic, bubbly, and joyful routine. It appears that she's really enjoying this!

Once her routine ends and everyone applauds, she takes a bow and exits the ice. Her coach congratulates her as she waves to MELISSA and HIROKO (who gives her the middle finger) before heading to the kiss and cry booth.

HIROKO, dark look on her face, is next. She reaches the centre of the ice rink after AMANDA'S score announcement, and her routine begins.

She performs a mysterious and ecstatic routine. MELISSA wonders if she could ever be as good as her.

HIROKO ends her routine with thunderous applause from the audience. She takes a bow and exits the ice, heading to the kiss and cry booth without saying a single word. She also ignores MELISSA, the last to go.

Her nerves are racking. She stares at the ice rink with sheer doubt but tries to build up her confidence. She tries one last time to calm down against MIZUHA'S words before finally stepping on the ice.

MICHAEL says to MELISSA...

MICHAEL

Melissa, listen, I am very proud of you. Now get out there and show them what you're made of.

... to which MELISSA hesitatingly nods "I will..."

MELISSA warms up on the ice, relaxing herself as much as possible. She approaches her mother as she says to her "Good luck!" in Japanese.

KAOKO

Just do your best, okay? You can do this.

MELISSA reaches the centre of the ice, and with everything on the line for her, she begins her routine.

Everything she had been taught and trained for had come to this. MELISSA alone determines how she will do here. She has only one thing on her mind: not to make one single mistake.

KAOKO cheers her daughter on with such sayings as "That's my girl!" MELISSA continues to focus, nonetheless.

Just when MELISSA was about to finish her routine, MIZUHA'S words come right back at her, causing her to lose her focus and ---

CRASH!!!

MELISSA falls on the ice. She cringes in pain. Everything stops completely. Her figure skating routine is now over.

KAOKO acts like she's going to panic and rushes to where MELISSA entered the ice rink, MICHAEL the same.

Assistant figure skaters help a frustrated MELISSA exit the ice. AMANDA, KAOKO, and MICHAEL approach her and try to comfort her.

KAOKO tries to reach her hand onto MELISSA in "It's okay" fashion, but she smacks it away and dashes out of the area. KAOKO and MICHAEL go after her.

... all this with murmurs of concern come about from everyone.

INT. ALEXANDRA PALACE ICE RINK, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

MELISSA furiously dashes for the exit. She kicks the walls and curses out loud while KAOKO and MICHAEL go on a search for her. They see her enter a room. She shuts the door before they even have a chance to catch her.

KAOKO and MICHAEL try desperately to get MELISSA to open the door, but she refuses. Inside the room, MELISSA tries to hold back tears of failure.

On the other side, though...

KAOKO
(knocking, then banging
on the door)
Melissa! MELISSA!! Open this
door!!! Open this door right now!!!
MELISSA!!!

MICHAEL
Melissa, please! I know you're
upset right now, but you've got to
bear with us! You've only made one
mistake, just one mistake! It's
nothing to be worrying about! Just
please stop and think about this
for a moment!

AMANDA and a few staff members rush to the scene.

AMANDA
Is Melissa in there?

MICHAEL
Yep, and I don't think she's ever
coming out...

A staff member sets MICHAEL and KAOKO aside and knocks on the
door.

STAFF MEMBER 1
Excuse me, ma'am, you don't have
permission to be in there.

No response.

STAFF MEMBER 1 (CONT'D)
Ma'am? Can you hear me? You're not
supposed to be in there! Ma'am, are
you listening to me?! You're not
supposed to be in there!! Ma'am!?!?

STAFF MEMBER 2
I'm calling the authorities.

KAOKO
Melissa, please! I've given you all
that I have! I gave you months and
months of hard work and training,
and you're freaking out just
because of a simple fall?! Just let
the problem go!! It's gonna be
okay, I've been through something
like this too! Just please open the
door, please!!!

Inside the room, as more hard knocking comes about from the door, MELISSA feels more humiliated than ever before.

On the other side, MICHAEL makes a sudden realisation.

MICHAEL

Hold on... Why do I have a feeling
there's an emergency hatchet in
that room?

MELISSA hears this and notices a hatchet on the floor in front of her almost immediately, while everyone tries to figure out what he meant.

MICHAEL quickly rushes to the door and knocks on it.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Melissa?! Melissa, you better not
be doing what I think you're doing
in there!! Melissa!! OPEN UP!!!
MELISSA!!!

MELISSA blocks the door, sits down, places her right leg on a chair, wields the hatchet to where her right knee is, and gets ready to chop it in half, with no holding back.

Everyone on the other side catches on and panics. They do whatever they can to get MELISSA to open the door, with KAOKO acting like she's going to have a heart attack.

We hear people say things to MELISSA such as...

STAFF MEMBER 3

Ma'am, open the door this
instant!!!

MICHAEL

Don't do something you're gonna
regret, you hear?!?

STAFF MEMBER 4

Ma'am, please, you have to think
this over!!!

STAFF MEMBER 5

Answer us this instant!!!

STAFF MEMBER 6

Put the hatchet down now!!!

... and finally...

KAOKO
Melissa, please!!! Stop this
nonsense!!!

MELISSA
(snaps)
Shut up! SHUT UP!! SHUT UP!!! ALL
OF YOU!!! I'm not taking this
anymore. If I can't be perfect, if
I can't make anyone happy, I can't
do anything anymore...

She gets her hatchet ready so that she can finally strike it down on her right knee like an axe cutting down a wooden log, holding back tears if possible.

On the other side...

STAFF MEMBER 7
I'm breaking the door down!

The staff member does whatever it takes while MELISSA ignores. She lets out her sobbing as she looks at her right knee, initially fearing the worse to happen, but turns fierce anyway as she is just about to make her move with the hatchet

She gasps, as if she had a heart attack. Motionless, she drops the hatchet and faints.

HIROKO enters and notices the staff member finally managing to break down the door with everyone immediately heading inside, gasping at the sight of MELISSA on the floor, unconscious. Her right knee is luckily not fractured. KAOKO rushes inside to pick MELISSA up. Once the situation is clear, everyone exits, with KAOKO holding a passed-out MELISSA in her arms.

FADE OUT

CUT TO:

INT. MELISSA'S HOME, FOYER - THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON

MELISSA walks out of her room when the sight of her mother causes her to turn around. KAOKO stops her.

KAOKO
(in Japanese)
Wait, Melissa!

MELISSA turns around to look at her with an "Oh my God, what could she possibly want?!" expression.

KAOKO (CONT'D)

(in English)

Thank goodness you're okay! I forgot to tell you that you made it to the figure skating championship in Sheffield! You just made it by a couple of points!

MELISSA

(uninterested)

Yeah? What else is new?

KAOKO

How's your right knee? Are you feeling alright? Hopefully that little mistake at the end didn't put you all down or anything, right?

MELISSA

(looks at her right knee)

It's not even broken.

KAOKO

Very good! I just thought that if it actually was broken, you wouldn't be able to go figure skating again! But, we don't wanna go ahead and jinx everything up now, don't we? Now come along, it's time for your figure skating lessons ---

MELISSA

No.

KAOKO

I'm sorry, what?

MELISSA

No. I quit. I'm done. Now if you'll excuse me ---

MELISSA is just about to head back to her room when KAOKO stops her.

KAOKO

(in Japanese)

Wait, Melissa!

MELISSA turns around again, more annoyed this time.

KAOKO (CONT'D)

(in English)

I know what's going on. You're still mad about that one mistake?! Just let it go already! All figure skaters go through something like that in their routines! Just make sure you don't do it again next time! That's all you have to do! Stop making this a big deal!

MELISSA

Then what's with all this talk about me being perfect?

KAOKO

What?! I never said that ---

MELISSA

Well, it sounded like you did. You signed me up for ballet and that championship in Sheffield, and you didn't even tell me! I told you I wasn't gonna be ready, but NO! You got too excited after I went out with Joel so you thought I had everything I needed to know on that ice rink! All you did was rush me through, and you know what I'm starting to realise? All you cared about was yourself!

KAOKO

(shocked and dismayed)

I would never ---

MELISSA

Yes, you did! You actually thought I was gonna be like you?! You just wanted me to be a figure skater so that I can make money and not be homeless. Just because you did it doesn't mean I'm gonna do the same thing!

MELISSA

I cannot be like you! I never wanted to do this in the first place! You only taught me for a couple of months! Other figure skaters take years to get it right! You can't rush these kinds of things, you know.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

I cannot be like one of them, and that's what's wrong with Asian families: They're always trying to shape up their kids instead of letting them do their own things. You know what I think? You're expecting way too much of me! You should've just let me play the guitar and get a job that I wanted when I had the chance.

As MELISSA is just about to head back to her room again, KAOKO starts to become furious.

KAOKO

Why you ---

KAOKO gets MELISSA to turn around and look at her.

KAOKO

You listen to me: I will make you a great figure skater! I am only trying to help you, and I am not putting all of those months of hard work in the trash! Now, if you're not gonna take this seriously, you had better find a real job after high school, or I will send you to the worst homeless shelter in all of London and we'll see how you like it!

MELISSA

You're doing it again!

KAOKO

What am I doing again?!

MELISSA

You're caring about yourself instead of what I want to do ---

KAOKO

Don't you give me that measly crap, you hear me?! I am your mother!!! I make all of the rules here!!!

MELISSA

You actually missed one rule: If you don't regret having an abortion, don't sweat the small stuff. Now let go!

MELISSA dashes right towards her room as an insulted KAOKO is just about to burst her top.

KAOKO
(in Japanese)
... Why you ---

She comes charging up to MELISSA already in her room...

KAOKO (CONT'D)
(in English)
Come back here, you feckless cu ---

... while MELISSA slams the door right in front of her.

INT. MELISSA'S ROOM - IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS

KAOKO bangs on the door mercilessly while MELISSA watches with a resting bitch face-like expression. We hear her mother go berserk, saying things such as...

KAOKO
MELISSA!!! MELISSA!!! OPEN THE
DOOR!!! OPEN THE GODDAMN DOOR!!!
OPEN THE DOOR!!!

... and ...

KAOKO (CONT'D)
(in Japanese)
F#*K!!!

While a hot-headed KAOKO continues to bang on the door, MELISSA lies down on the bed in frustration, not wanting to get up.

CUT TO:

MELISSA plays on her guitar and sings to herself to keep her cool, but continuously makes mistakes. It seems that she's too angry to even play.

INT. MELISSA'S HOME, KITCHEN - NIGHT

MELISSA, KAOKO, TARO, and YU'ICHI eat dinner together as a family. However, TARO and YU'ICHI notice that MELISSA and KAOKO are not speaking to each other.

YU'ICHI
(in Japanese)
What's up with them?

TARO gives an "I dunno" expression.

MELISSA and KAOKO give each other despising looks as they eat.

EXT. STREET IN LONDON - DAY

MELISSA walks to school, caring less about her surroundings.

INT. MELISSA'S HIGH SCHOOL, MELISSA'S CLASSROOM - DAY

MELISSA is unable to concentrate in school. Instead, she scribbles on her notebook like she can't give a bloody hell anymore. Her friends, JANET, OLIVIA, and EVE, notice this and worry about her.

INT. MELISSA'S HIGH SCHOOL, MAIN CAMPUS - AFTERNOON

MELISSA begins to walk home from school. Her friends try to comfort her but to no avail. She just keeps on walking.

EXT. STREET IN LONDON - AFTERNOON

MELISSA walks home still not caring less. JOEL notices her and tries to approach her.

JOEL

Hey Melissa. Are you okay?

No response.

JOEL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I couldn't make it to the figure skating trials. I actually almost forgot it fell on the same night as our date. So, how was it? Did you do well?

Still no response.

JOEL

What's wrong, Melissa? Are you alright? Are you not feeling well? Did something happen at the trials? You know, if there's anything I can do for you, you just let me know. You don't have to be afraid to tell me. You can talk to me about anything you want.

MELISSA has just had enough with JOEL.

MELISSA
Can you piss off, please?

JOEL is startled by this.

JOEL
I --- I'm sorry... I --- I was just
trying to help ---

MELISSA
Of course you aren't. Now piss off,
please. I don't need your help!

... and with that, MELISSA gets as far away from JOEL as possible.

INT. MELISSA'S HOME, FOYER - AFTERNOON

MELISSA enters without saying a word, and walks to her room.

Her little brother, TARO, confronts her again as she walks by.

TARO
Onee-chan, let's play Sega!

No response. She continues to walk to her room, then closes the door as she enters.

INT. MELISSA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MELISSA sighs with disbelief as she lies down on the bed frustrated. She reaches for her guitar, but doesn't feel like playing it. JOEL tries to call her on her phone, but she doesn't answer. She stares into space before finally taking a nap.

The last thing we see is her ice skates, left to the side to cover in dust, never to be touched again.

EXT. STREET IN LONDON - CONTINUOUS

JOEL is unable to reach MELISSA by phone. He sighs and walks off.

INT. MELISSA'S ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

MELISSA wakes up from bed with disillusionment once again written all over her face. She looks at two items one by one: her guitar and her ice skates. She decides which one to use for the day...

INT. MELISSA'S HOME, FOYER - CONTINUOUS

With guitar in hand, MELISSA exits her room and leaves the house. She notices her mother KAOKO making breakfast in the kitchen, but cares less about her as she leaves the house.

EXT. STREET IN LONDON - MORNING

Once again with a blank-face, MELISSA tries to find a different spot to play her guitar.

EXT. BOTANICAL GARDEN IN LONDON - MORNING

MELISSA wanders around a beautiful garden looking for a place to sit amid a peaceful atmosphere.

Once she finds a place to sit, she tunes her guitar and starts to play.

It is around this time she starts to gain back her guitar-playing abilities, despite making mistakes here and there.

She almost wants to give up. Yet, she looks out to the horizon for any cherry blossoms in bloom.

MIZUHA (O.S.)

I don't think you can find cherry blossoms here...

MELISSA finds MIZUHA, surprised to even see her there in the first place.

MIZUHA (CONT'D)

If that's what you're looking for, they usually don't come out here until April. I know that's what makes Japan so special, but I think that we can represent so much more than just cherry blossoms and sushi.

MELISSA

Nagata-sensei?! What are you doing here?!

MIZUHA

I always come here during the weekend. This is where I do my yoga practice. What are you doing here?

MELISSA

(realises)

You know what, I really don't know. I thought I was gonna find a place where I can play my guitar properly, and then suddenly I ended up here. That, and the cherry blossoms.

MIZUHA

You play the guitar?

MELISSA

Yes, I've actually played the guitar since before I even attended middle school. I think I was in either the fifth or the sixth grade. I don't remember much, but...

(beat; hesitates)

Nagata-sensei, I --- I'm really sorry about what I said to you at the ballet academy. I didn't know what I was thinking. I felt so disillusioned with myself because I was angry about my mum doing things without telling me because she was super excited that I was becoming a figure skater just like her. I'm sure you still don't want to forgive me, though.

MIZUHA

No, Melissa. I'm the one who should be sorry for slapping you. I'm sorry that I yelled at you and called you hurtful names. I know I can be pissy at times but look at how much you have improved during my ballet sessions! I even noticed a hint of ballet when you were performing at that figure skating trials the other day.

MELISSA

Wait, you were there at the trials?!

MIZUHA

I was. I saw when you were figure skating on the ice, and I saw when you made that mistake. I thought you were amazing up until that point, and when I thought about it, I realised maybe I was a little too harsh on you.

MELISSA

Nagata-sensei, it's not your fault. I think I actually deserved that slap. After all this time acting like I don't have a purpose in anything anymore, that's my "wake up and get your head and ass together" kind of slap, the one that tells me "Hey, I'm put on this Earth for a reason, so why do I act like I don't want to do anything about it other than take a crappy hobby and make it my only life goal?"

MIZUHA

Um, Melissa ---

MELISSA

That's the kind of slap that tells me I haven't tried hard enough, that I had to let what you said to me almost ruin my chances of going to the championship! If I had kept my mouth shut, none of this would be happening! I would have walked out with a perfect score by now, but no!!! I had to tick you off, and now I can't even play my guitar properly anymore!

MELISSA

I can't believe my mum thought it was a great idea for me to be a figure skater; Look at where it's gotten me into! If I had become a famous guitar player, which I was sure I was gonna work hard for, I wouldn't get caught up in any of this! I just can't seem to figure out what's wrong with myself these days...

MELISSA stresses out before...

MIZUHA

Melissa, you have such a way with words.

MELISSA

(in Japanese)

What are you talking about?

MIZUHA

I think you're setting way too much expectations for yourself; That's why you're doing all of that complaining. But I don't see why you should be doing that when you've already done so well plugging in what you have learned from ballet into figure skating on that ice floor. You should be appreciative that you are given this chance to try out new things and manage to do well in them; I'm sure your mother would be very proud of how much you have become. If you can play the guitar, you can do anything else in life.

MIZUHA

A person can have more than one career path to pursue in the future, and seeing how much you have grown, you already remind me of those people.

MELISSA

(caring less)

I'm still in high school, you know.

MIZUHA

Yes, but that doesn't mean you don't have a whole life ahead of you to keep trying something new! I learned this from a movie I once saw: If you feel like you're worn out and not being able to do something like guitar playing, try and give yourself some rest every once in a while. That's why I always let you go on break in the middle of ballet sessions.

MELISSA

Aren't I giving myself a break right now?

MIZUHA

I'm saying that if you're letting not being able to play the guitar or figure skate properly get the best of you, stop doing them. Don't even think about them for a while. Try to do something else like take a long walk, or look at some scenery, have fun with your friends, and sooner or later, you'll be able to play the guitar and figure skate again.

MELISSA

How do you know? You're a ballet instructor. You're supposed to be a professional at this ---

MIZUHA

Yes, but I know because I have gone through those kinds of problems too. Doing ballet has always been my calling, but there are times when I wish I could just stop doing it and do something else, when I could just give up when I make a single mistake, but that never stopped me. In fact, there was even a time when I thought I almost couldn't do ballet anymore.

MELISSA

(realises)

I guess that sounds like me...

MIZUHA

Then, I learned to relax by doing all of those things that I mentioned, and I learned to put trust in myself. After all, ballet was my calling, and I knew that doing ballet was good for me, so if I was to succeed in something that I felt appreciative about, I had to be able to believe in myself. I think that's what you need to work on as well: Even if you feel all angst-ridden for wanting to play the guitar in favour of figure skating, you should be lucky that your mother gave you the opportunity to make the most out of your life and to help you move your body a little bit more!

(MORE)

MIZUHA (CONT'D)

Once you keep that in mind,
anything that you do in life is
gonna be easy! It's all in a matter
of confidence if you want to
survive.

MELISSA

You know, I never gave any thought
as to why I wanted to be a figure
skater in the first place. The
first time I did all of those moves
on the ice in front of my mum was
because I was using my instinct,
but she wanted me to push that
further. I didn't know why, but I
suddenly had the ability to do it
like I have her figure skating
blood or something like that! I
only kept going just to make my mum
happy.

MELISSA

I mean, if she can be a famous
figure skater, why can't I be a
famous figure skater if that's all
she's gonna think of me! Now that
we're having this talk, though, I'm
starting to feel like I'm becoming
too much like her instead of
myself. I'm pretty sure my mum also
expected too much of herself while
she was a figure skater but managed
to overcome her anxieties. I never
had a real purpose in doing any of
this. I only kept figure skating
because my mum told me to. Maybe
it's just my instinct talking to me
again...

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Nagata-sensei, I was wondering: Do
you think it's worth it if I become
a figure skater just like my mother
but found my own way of doing it?

MIZUHA

You know, Melissa, I always wanted
to be just like the ballet dancers
I looked up to when I was little,
but I can't just simply copy what
they did. I had to follow my own
style, and I needed to learn how to
develop it.

(MORE)

MIZUHA (CONT'D)

Every technique that had been taught, whether it be in figure skating or ballet, eventually becomes our own. We need to keep experimenting with what style fits best for us. Only then can we stand out from the rest of the crowd.

MELISSA

I guess I'll keep that in mind the next time I figure skate, but what about ballet? You kicked me out of your studio.

MIZUHA

Yes, but you could also do it outside of my studio.

MELISSA

(feeling stupid)

You're right. Why didn't I think of that?

MIZUHA

But you can come back to my studio anytime you like, no fee required. There is no price to pay for improvement. Just make sure that your body is ready to do it.

MELISSA

Well thanks, but I don't think my body is ready to do anything anymore...

MIZUHA

Hm, I think I know how we can fix that...

MELISSA

Like how?

MIZUHA

How about a yoga session? That's what I always do when I need to get my body ready for excessive activity.

MELISSA

Do I have to be naked?

MIZUHA

What? No! Of course not! Whoever told you about that?!

MELISSA
Uh, nobody?

MIZUHA
(suspicious)
Uh-huh...

MELISSA
(gives in)
Oh well, I guess I'll give it a try.

MIZUHA
Excellent! I'll get you a yoga mat, and we'll get started.

MELISSA
I sure hope this is good for me...

MIZUHA
You shouldn't just be sure; You should know this is good for you!

MIZUHA and MELISSA take part in a yoga session together, with MELISSA slowly beginning to build up her confidence again.

We quickly transition to JOEL attempting to make another phone call to MELISSA. Realising he should probably give her some space, he reluctantly chooses not to do it.

Back at the botanical garden, MELISSA and MIZUHA sit together.

MELISSA
Nagata-sensei, have you ever thought of doing something else other than ballet? I mean, if you had to pick anything other than ballet, what would it be?

MIZUHA
I actually never thought about that. I've got so wrapped up in ballet that I never got a chance to think about doing anything else. I really wanted to experiment with other dances, though, not to say that ballet and dancing in general are completely related or anything! I was actually part of the University of London Arts Programme at one point.

MELISSA

Really? I wonder what happened...

MIZUHA

I dropped out after a year. I didn't think it was my life's ambition. I was actually a coordinator at four dance schools before I became a ballet instructor.

MELISSA

Wow, that's really cool. I'm in my eleventh year of high school and I don't even have a part-time job! All I ever wanted to do was to play the guitar because I had nothing else to do that I felt like I was good at, and now thanks to my mum's over-excitement because of what she saw from me the first time I ice-skated, I'm going to be a professional figure skater. I feel like I lead such a weird life, you know.

MIZUHA

Did you ever take the time to think about what else you could be good at?

MELISSA

No, not really. Playing the guitar was all what's on my mind. Because I let my mum do all of the decision-making for me, that's how I ended up being a professional figure skater. I wish there could be a time when I could just replace figure skating with something else, but I couldn't find anything that could take its slot other than guitar playing.

MIZUHA

But you ended up doing so well.

MELISSA

Then that's the only time you're ever gonna see me do well. I've got nothing left to prove anymore. What else can I possibly show you?

MIZUHA

Well, there is one thing left you can be able to prove...

A curious MELISSA eventually says...

MELISSA

Eh? You can't be serious! I don't know, Nagata-sensei... I'm not so sure if I'm ready to do it all over again...

MIZUHA

You don't have to if you don't want to, but at least to me your body seems ready enough. I think you have just the right amount of confidence you need to get back out there again.

MELISSA tries to think it over but becomes doubtful.

MIZUHA (CONT'D)

I'll tell you what: I'll give you some time to think about it. I'm gonna go smoke a cigarette over there if you need me...

Just as she is about to exit the scene...

MELISSA

Actually, I don't have to think about it.

INT. MELISSA'S HOME, FOYER - DAY

MELISSA quickly enters her room and changes into her figure skating outfit, grabs her ice skates, and dashes out to the front door, still with guitar in hand. Her mother KAOKO tries to stop her...

KAOKO

(in Japanese)

Melissa, where are you going?!

... but it was too late. KAOKO is left questioned and concerned.

EXT. STREET IN LONDON - DAY

MELISSA, with guitar on one hand and ice skates on the other, hurries her way to...

INT. ALEXANDRA PALACE ICE RINK, MAIN AREA - DAY

No one is present but MIZUHA and MELISSA.

After moments of practising, MELISSA plays a melody on her guitar and focuses, ice skates already on. MIZUHA watches her.

MELISSA hands MIZUHA her guitar before entering the ice rink, warming up before reaching the centre of the ice and carefully beginning her routine.

MELISSA slowly regains her figure skating abilities while making sure she doesn't repeat a similar mistake she made at the trials. After closing her routine, MIZUHA gives her an expression of approval.

INT. MELISSA'S HOME, LIVING ROOM - DAY

KAOKO is on her laptop, watching old videos of herself from her figure skating days, feeling nostalgic.

Suddenly, she comes across an old video of her daughter learning to ice-skate for the first time when she was little. She plays the video.

The video shows a very young MELISSA at an ice rink taking baby steps on the ice, with her mother's voice heard off-camera. KAOKO watches the video tearfully.

She stops the video and pulls herself together. Then, she starts to feel guilty. Footsteps approach her. KAOKO sees MELISSA in her figure skating outfit, holding her guitar and ice-skates, looking as stunning as ever.

MELISSA

I'm ready.

EXT. ICESHEFFIELD, PARKING LOT - DAY

MELISSA and her family arrive at the sight of MELISSA'S figure skating championship in Sheffield, UK. They walk up to the entrance.

TARO

The National Videogame Museum ---

KAOKO

Not now!

INT. ICESHEFFIELD, MAIN LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

MELISSA and her family look around to find out where they need to be.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Melissa!

MELISSA notices MICHAEL coming up to her.

MELISSA

Michael!

She comes up to him as well.

MICHAEL

I've been wondering where you were! Listen, do you have your list of techniques you'll be doing for the championship?

MELISSA

Yes, it's right here in these pieces of paper...

MELISSA hands MICHAEL her information for the championship in paper form. MICHAEL reads through it quickly.

MICHAEL

Excellent. I'll hand this over to the officials immediately. Just so you know, you're the last one up for the ladies' programme again.

MELISSA

(suddenly confused)
Wait, what?!

MICHAEL

Hopefully, your mother got that message.

KAOKO

Yes, I did. Thanks again, Michael. You know, we couldn't have done any of this without your help.

MICHAEL

Always my pleasure, Mrs. Yamaguchi.

MELISSA suddenly remembers what she wanted to say to him.

MELISSA

Wait, Michael!

MICHAEL
Yeah, Melissa?

MELISSA
I want to let you know I'm really
sorry for my behaviour the other
day. I just got so angry and
frustrated over ---

MICHAEL
(immediately)
Oh, don't worry about that! Right
now, we have to focus on the
championship! Now come on, I'll
show you to the locker and changing
rooms...

KAOKO
I'll go with you. Taro, Anata, you
go ahead and find your seats and
don't cause any trouble, especially
you, Taro!

NOTE: "Anata," though it usually means "you" in Japanese, can
also mean "dear" to address husbands (for women).

TARO
Hey, if you're comparing me to Shin-
Chan, forget it!

As MICHAEL, MELISSA, and KAOKO exit...

MICHAEL
Why'd you bring your guitar with
you?

MELISSA
Emotional support.

MICHAEL
Does it bark or crawl? I thought
that only applies to animals!

INT. ICESHEFFIELD, LOCKER AND CHANGING ROOMS - CONTINUOUS

The setup is very similar to that of the Alexandra Palace Ice
Rink.

MICHAEL says a few words to MELISSA before he exits. KAOKO
arrives beside her.

KAOKO

I think you know what to do from here, Melissa. I'll be out there if you need me.

MELISSA

(stops her)

Wait, Mum, do you know why I'm the last one up again?

KAOKO

I actually don't know why, but you're gonna have to get used to it. Ask whoever wrote this film!

MELISSA

Uh, what?!

KAOKO exits.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Wait, Mum, don't you think they're on to me or something?! Mum?!

MELISSA changes into her figure skating outfit. She looks inside her bag and notices her phone, seeing a message that JOEL will be attending the figure skating championship, anticipating her performance in the ladies' programme.

Suddenly feeling bad for JOEL, she hesitatingly calls him.

EXT. HIGHWAY IN SHEFFIELD - AT THE SAME TIME

JOEL rides in a car with his parents to iceSheffield. He is disappointed that his phone suddenly died. He sits there in boredom.

INT. ICESHEFFIELD, LOCKER AND CHANGING ROOMS - AT THE SAME TIME

No answer. MELISSA tries to text JOEL and waits for a response. She eventually gives up. She sees her guitar and feels the urge to play on it.

Every girl in the room stops what they're doing to listen to her play her guitar and sing. AMANDA and HIROKO enter the scene.

Everyone applauds once MELISSA is done.

AMANDA approaches her.

AMANDA

Melissa! Thank goodness! Are you feeling alright?

MELISSA

Yeah, I'm alright. Why?

AMANDA

I really, really like your guitar-playing!

MELISSA

Thank you but it's nothing that special really ---

AMANDA

No no no, I really actually liked the way you played on that guitar! How come you never tell me these kinds of things?

MELISSA

Well, first of all, we only met once, and second, you never seemed to have asked me about that before, or was it I never told you about it?

HIROKO comes up to her.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Hiroko...

(in Japanese)

Um...

HIROKO sticks out her hand and smiles. MELISSA smiles back and shakes her hand, symbolising a new friendly rivalry.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

(in Japanese)

Just you wait, Hiroko.

HIROKO nods back.

The first six figure skaters on the roster take on the ice. Everyone heads out, including MELISSA as she meets up with MICHAEL and KAKO outside. She notices HIROKO; Both give each other friendly nods as they part.

EXT. HIGHWAY IN SHEFFIELD - DAY

JOEL and his parents are just miles away. He looks out to the horizon in the car while his parents have a sort of bizarre conversation.

CRASH!!!

Another car collides with JOEL and his parents, leading to a fatal traffic accident. They are immediately killed on impact.

INT. ICESHEFFIELD, PRACTICE ICE RINK - DAY

MELISSA and MICHAEL give each other a fist bump before MELISSA goes right to practice.

MICHAEL

You got this Melissa!

MELISSA

Thanks, Michael.

As MELISSA practises for her routine, MICHAEL and KAOKO stand outside of the rink.

MICHAEL

She's grown a lot since the first time I saw her. At first, she thought playing the guitar was the only thing she could do in her life, but I'm glad you encouraged her to do something that had caused her to evolve somehow. It's surprising to me how she could be able to do more than two things at once!

KAOKO

She doesn't go on until a few hours, am I right?

MICHAEL

I already told her that she's the last one to go. That should give her just the right amount of time to get ready.

(beat)

Listen, this may sound like a silly question but do you think Melissa will ever be as great as you?

KAOKO thinks about it for a moment.

KAOKO

There is a saying, Michael: In this world, there is no such thing as something that is completely and entirely original; Everything comes from somewhere. The reason I say that is because I always thought I wanted Melissa to be a great figure skater just like me; That's why as someone who was a professional figure skater, I coach her. I taught her everything I knew and remembered over the past few months: every move, every technique, every sequence, every turn; But when I started coaching her again not too long ago, I noticed she's managed to turn all of those into her own craft, as if she's developed her own style of figure skating, which is a good thing for all of us! Every figure skater knows they can't get away with being cheap imitations of someone else; It doesn't work like that, y'know!

MICHAEL

Yeah, I highly doubt she would go ahead and literally copy off every single move you've done and call it her own; Too heavily sounds like plagiarism, if you ask me. That's like copying out of a novel word-for-word and claiming it to be your work instead of someone else's!

KAOKO

I think Melissa was right when she said she couldn't be like me. Most figure skaters take months or even years to get everything right. I only trained her for, like, two school semesters! It's my fault I rushed her. I got so excited to see my daughter come up on top, I had to let her go through so much trouble just to get there. I'm the one who putted her through harm's way. I'm the one who made things worse for her.

(MORE)

KAOKO (CONT'D)

I should have just let her do what she wanted when she had the chance...

MICHAEL

Hey now, don't put yourself in the blame circle! Your daughter has been willing to grow as a person ever since you decided to make her a figure skater, even if she has to suck it up, and even though she never asked for any of this. She says she's had a hard time finding something else she's good at in life, and now I think she's already found it.

MICHAEL

To me, I feel like this goes back to one simple concept: Any problem that she has, she learns to overcome it. Sure, she let one little mistake at the end of the trials get the best of her, but after a consultation I'm assuming that she had, she's somehow back on the ice ready to take on the next big challenge that comes her way! I'm telling you, there is no stopping her from making the most out of her life, don't you think?

KAOKO

I guess you're right...

MICHAEL

Well, if you need me, I'm gonna look up some fake news...

MICHAEL takes out his phone to find...

NEWSCASTER

We have breaking news on an automobile accident that occurred just moments ago along the side of Sheffield Parkway. Police have arrived on the scene to investigate the situation and confirm the automobile accident to be an act of murder. A family of three is among those who have died, as well as the driver of the vehicle responsible for the incident.

Live footage shows two severely damaged vehicles caught in a collision. An area of Sheffield Parkway is closed with police surrounding the scene. MICHAEL recognises one of the vehicles almost immediately.

MICHAEL

Hold on, I know that vehicle...

KAOKO looks at MICHAEL'S phone to see what's going on.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

It's the same one that I gave
JOEL'S dad on his birthday. I
wonder if they show the license
plate...

They did. MICHAEL is left in total shock.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Oh no...

MELISSA begins to see MICHAEL and KAOKO startled there.

KAOKO

I hope that's fake news you're
reading, Michael...

MICHAEL

I highly doubt this was staged
either, Mrs. Yamaguchi...

They look at MELISSA and wonder if they should tell her, but it was too late as she approaches them.

MELISSA

Something wrong?

EXT. ICESHEFFIELD, PARKING LOT - DAY

MELISSA and MICHAEL rush inside a pulled-up taxi.

TAXI DRIVER

Where can I take you two today ---

MICHAEL

Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Glossop
Road, and step on it!

TAXI DRIVER

Right back at 'ya!

... and the taxi heads off!

MELISSA
 (worried)
 It's because I told him to piss off

MICHAEL
 Melissa, no, don't blame yourself
 please! This isn't your fault!

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 I don't think I'm ever gonna like
 the looks of this...

The taxi proceeds with breakneck speed.

EXT. ROYAL HALLAMSHIRE HOSPITAL, MAIN ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The taxi pulls over right next to the main entrance. MELISSA and MICHAEL immediately get out of the vehicle and rush inside.

INT. ROYAL HALLAMSHIRE HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

MELISSA and MICHAEL check in at the front desk. They make way for JOEL and his parents being carried on stretchers, covered in medical bandages. They cannot believe what they're seeing.

We find MELISSA and MICHAEL at the waiting room, the former filled with nothing but sheer regret. A hospital official approaches them, nodding "no." MICHAEL struggles to come up with words to say as MELISSA isolates herself, holding back tears.

MICHAEL reminds MELISSA "It's time to go." She reluctantly replies and they exit.

EXT. ROYAL HALLAMSHIRE HOSPITAL, MAIN ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

MELISSA and MICHAEL go inside the same taxi that dropped them off.

The same TAXI DRIVER asks...

TAXI DRIVER
 So, how did it go?

MICHAEL nods "no." The TAXI DRIVER understands this and returns them back to iceSheffield.

INT. ICESHEFFIELD, MAIN LOBBY - DAY

KAOKO, YU'ICHI, TARO, AMANDA, and HIROKO all wait for MELISSA and MICHAEL to return. They see them at the front entrance.

MELISSA finds her mother approaching her. With tears in her eyes, she runs up to her and they embrace. KAOKO comforts a sorrowing MELISSA letting it all out.

KAOKO catches up on the situation thanks to MICHAEL while everyone else watches them, feeling MELISSA'S pain.

INT. ICESHEFFIELD, WAITING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Other than a television showing live footage of the championship, the area is dead silent. MELISSA just sits there alone, guitar and ice skates alongside her. She feels entirely blank.

MELISSA looks at her guitar and the television. Caring less about her cue, she decides to play on her guitar.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK

EXT. MELISSA'S HIGH SCHOOL, SCHOOL YARD - DAY

MELISSA continues to play the guitar and sing, with JOEL sitting next to her. They appear as their younger high school selves. JOEL applauds once she is finished.

JOEL

That's really cool, Melissa! I didn't know you could play well!

MELISSA

Oh, this is nothing, really! You should see when I play the more advanced songs!

MELISSA tunes her instrument before...

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Wanna see me hit some high notes? Watch this!

She plays on her guitar and sings again until we hear AMANDA'S VOICE-OVER call out MELISSA'S name.

END FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

INT. ICESHEFFIELD, WAITING ROOM - AFTERNOON

AMANDA manages to wake MELISSA up.

AMANDA

It's time.

MELISSA looks at the television, seeing that her cue is about to arrive.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Are you ready?

MELISSA

I'm ready.

AMANDA

Okay, let's go.

MELISSA takes her guitar and ice skates with her, and walks with AMANDA to the exit.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Are you feeling alright?

MELISSA

Yeah. I'm fine. I'm fine.

The two of them leave as the television displays a list of current standings by score rank for the ladies' programme.

INT. ICESHEFFIELD, MAIN ICE RINK - CONTINUOUS

Everyone is waiting in anticipation for the last group of ladies figure skaters to go for the day. Among the audience are MELISSA'S friends, JANET, OLIVIA, and EVE.

EVE

I don't get it. Why are we here again?

JANET

We're here to see Melissa go on the ice and figure skate.

OLIVIA

... by the fact that we all thought she was gonna take ballet and stick with it.

JANET

Yeah, I wonder how you can take ballet and do figure skating at the same time. It sounds like a good idea but it just feels so odd to me...

OLIVIA

No it's not. It's even. That's two different things right there. Add guitar-playing in the mix and that makes it three different things, which makes it odd. You get what I'm saying?

JANET

For all I know, that joke you're trying to make is shitty.

EVE

Look, there she is!

MELISSA appears from a distance, along with five other ladies figure skaters including AMANDA and HIROKO, outside of the rink. She appears blank-faced and depressed, much to their worry.

KAOKO (O.S.)

Melissa!

MELISSA sees her mother bring in MIZUHA.

MELISSA

(surprised)

... Nagata-sensei?!

MIZUHA comes up to her and embraces her. She then exits. MELISSA gives herself one last chance to boost up her confidence as a result.

With ice skates on, all six figure skaters make their way onto the ice to greet the audience before warming up.

Then begins the final portion of the ladies' programme. Five of the girls exit the ice so that the last one standing can perform her routine.

One of them, SYBIL, approaches MELISSA.

SYBIL

Excuse me, um, Melissa...

MELISSA

Yes, what can I help you with?

SYBIL

You don't happen to be that guitar player I saw from the locker room earlier today, aren't you?

MELISSA

Oh, um, yes I am. Why is that?

SYBIL

I actually thought you were amazing!

MELISSA is flattered by this.

SYBIL (CONT'D)

No, really! You're everything my dad wished I could've been! You see, he's a technical producer for a reality talent competition show, and he is in desperate need of some people who will take part in the show for the next season. How would you like to take part in an audition?

MELISSA

You know, someone else here thought I should do the same thing. Who was it? Um...

(looks at MICHAEL and
KAOKO)

... Actually, I'm good. I'll just leave my guitar-playing as a hobby, but thanks for asking.

SYBIL

Yeah, no problem. Suit yourself.

(heads to the side-lines)

So much for her taking part in "The Voice."

MELISSA wonders Wait, what did she say? before heading to the side-lines as well.

CUT TO:

The near end of the first figure skating routine as AMANDA sits next to MELISSA on the side-lines.

AMANDA

I remember when I lost someone special in my life.

MELISSA

What do you mean?

AMANDA

It was my final year of high school. I was friends with someone who was very close to me. We've known each other since nursery school, and we were about to spend the last few days of high school together before graduation. I knew her like she was my own sister, and we got along with each other very well. She was everything I could ever have for a friend...

MELISSA

That's very nice.

AMANDA

Then, in the middle of the year, while she was walking home from school one day, a madman ran her over and killed her.

MELISSA is shocked to hear this, but knows that this is nothing new to her.

The next figure skating routine is about to begin.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

The police confirmed that the man was heavily drunk while he was driving. They reported he knocked over two other vehicles that day.

MELISSA

How did this all affect you?

AMANDA

I was actually there when my friend got run over. I couldn't believe what I saw that day. I was in shock; I almost wanted to have a panic attack. When I saw that my friend got run over like that before my eyes, I was traumatised.

AMANDA

It just horrified me to see my friend get run over like that. I wanted to help her, but how can I help someone who's already dead?! What was I supposed to have done, tell her to watch out just as she was being hit by a truck?! I even wanted to take revenge against the bastard who killed her!

AMANDA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Luckily, someone was there to call 999 so that an ambulance could pick her up, but after she died, I just couldn't get over the whole thing. I wasn't able to sleep that night.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I didn't even want to go to school just when everyone was mourning her death, and when I did go, I just wanted to hide in the loos all day and never come out. I suffered from depression so much that I started to get failing grades in all of my classes...

AMANDA (CONT'D)

(wanting to break down)

Then, one day, a classmate of mine heard me crying all the way from the girls lavatory. She found me hiding at a corner there and she was comforting me.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

She said to me something like: "You know, it's hard to lose someone you've hold on to for so long, but you've got to have courage to live on. Just because someone in your life is gone doesn't mean they're gone forever; They'll always be in your heart..."

AMANDA (CONT'D)

"There's a lot of things that happen in this world without warning. That's why we have to live our lives to the very fullest. We cannot let anything hold us back.

(MORE)

AMANDA (CONT'D)

If you remember all of those things, I'm sure your friend would be very happy for you..." I think that's what she said.

AMANDA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I will never forget those words, and ever since then she became my new best friend. By the time we graduated from high school, she was the best thing that had ever happened to me recently, and I think she's sitting somewhere in the crowds right now...

MELISSA tries to find where AMANDA'S best friend is sitting before...

MELISSA

Can I ask you something, Amanda? You said that your friend's death affected your daily life and your time at school, am I right? So, how did it affect your time being a figure skater?

AMANDA

I didn't even want to do that either, but when it came right down to it, there's no escaping the joy and excitement of what figure skating can bring. That's why every time I get on the ice to perform, I always thought of the very person I held on to the most in my life since pre-school, and expressed all the times she was happy into my routines. Now, I'm going to do the same thing for my new best friend.

MELISSA

I am very happy for you, Amanda; I mean, I am very, very happy I get to call you my new best friend.

AMANDA

Aw, thank you so much ---

MELISSA

No, thank you, Amanda. You've given me all the courage that I needed to pick myself up, you and everyone else I have known in my entire life. Seeing me here right now, you'd be surprised of what I can do on the ice for the rest of this championship!

AMANDA

£10, I surprise you first!

MELISSA

£20, I pull off a doozy!

The two of them giggle very briefly as the second figure skating routine comes to a close. SYBIL enters the ice.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

So, is this your first time here in Sheffield?

AMANDA

Second time actually. Last time I was here, me and my family went to see my great aunt who was running this poorly reviewed 2-star hotel that's about a few minutes from here. She was a very crabby fellow if you ask me.

MELISSA

Why's that?

AMANDA

She kept complaining that the reason her hotel got two stars was because of fake reviews. She once filed a lawsuit against someone who spent an entire review ranting about roaches in the pillows. I think I remember she won the case, but she never talked about what she did with all of that money...

Somewhere in the crowds, we see YU'ICHI and TARO talking in Japanese.

YU'ICHI

Hey, you want to know what I think about J.K. Rowling? I think she has

TARO

What does that have to do with
Melissa's figure skating?

YU'ICHI

I was going to say "transgender
issues!" Look, I know we're
secondary characters, but still!

We transition to MICHAEL giving a stunned MELISSA a beautiful necklace.

MICHAEL

Joel wanted me to give you this,
Melissa. It's supposed to be a good
luck charm for when you enter the
championship. I guess he never got
a chance to see you try it on.

MELISSA puts it on and is left speechless, even as MICHAEL hands her a small mirror.

AMANDA

Wow, you look amazing!

MICHAEL

(to MELISSA)

There's no need to thank me. It is
I who should be thanking you.
Whatever happens out there today,
Melissa, just remember not to let
it get the best of you. You have
made me a very proud college
student, and I know that you'll do
more than what you're about to show
us at that ice rink. I wish you all
of the best, alright?

SYBIL is ready to begin her routine.

The thought of JOEL'S death continues to haunt MELISSA. She tries to meditate to get it out of her head.

CUT TO:

A brief FLASHBACK of MELISSA and MIZUHA doing yoga at that botanical garden in London. We eventually hear AMANDA'S VOICE-OVER once again calling out MELISSA'S name.

CUT TO:

AMANDA, ice skates on, manages to wake up MELISSA.

AMANDA
Wish me luck, okay?

AMANDA enters the ice while SYBIL hears her score. Finally, her routine begins. AMANDA shows all smiles, no nervousness, as her "new best friend" watches from the audience cheering her on.

Once her routine is finished, she exits the ice rink, meets up with her coach, high-fives MELISSA, and heads to the kiss and cry booth.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
I'm waiting for that £10, Melissa!

HIROKO is the next one up.

MELISSA
(in Japanese)
Good luck, Hiroko.

HIROKO
(in Japanese)
Leave it to me.

She enters the ice. After AMANDA hears her score, HIROKO does an electrifying routine, a "badass bitch" look covering her entire face. Everyone is amazed at what they're seeing, even MELISSA.

HIROKO is met with thunderous applause once she is finished. She exits the ice rink and approaches MELISSA.

HIROKO (CONT'D)
(in Japanese)
What do you think?

MELISSA
(in Japanese)
I'd never have thought of pulling off something like that before!

HIROKO
(in Japanese)
Think you can beat me?

She heads off to the kiss and cry booth...

KAOKO (O.S.)
Melissa-chan.

... while KAOKO reminds MELISSA...

KAOKO (CONT'D)
 (in Japanese)
 It's time.

MELISSA is the last to go. She feels nervous at first, but deep down, she knows what to do. She enters the ice rink, with everyone she knows rooting and cheering for her.

She reaches the centre, but just as she was about to start her routine, she hesitates, as if having a breakdown.

Then, she has a solution. She rushes towards MICHAEL.

MELISSA
 Michael, can you hand me my guitar?

MICHAEL
 (confused)
 Why the hell do you want me to do that ---

MELISSA
 Just give it to me!

MICHAEL quickly hands MELISSA her guitar. She plays on it after a moment of concentration. Everyone in the area is confused at first, but they eventually listen in.

Once MELISSA is finished, she hands her guitar back to MICHAEL, reaches the centre of the ice rink again and finally performs her routine like her life depends on it.

When she is finished with her emotional routine, MELISSA is met with outstanding applause. She did what she had to do. She exits the ice rink tearfully, holding on to her mother.

MELISSA
 (in Japanese)
 Thank you, Mum.

KAOKO
 (in Japanese)
 Shall we go?

MELISSA
 (in Japanese)
 Yeah.

... and with that, MELISSA, KAOKO, and MICHAEL head over to the kiss and cry booth. They pass by HIROKO and AMANDA, the latter giving a smirking MELISSA £20.

At the booth, the three of them await the results. MELISSA regrets JOEL not seeing her perform, but looks at her necklace reminding her where he'll always be.

After moments of waiting, we hear from the intercom...

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
The score please.

Rising tension for MELISSA as...

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Melissa Yamaguchi has earned in the
ladies' programme.....

CUT TO:

Blank, followed by...

INT. ICESHEFFIELD, HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

A sports broadcast interview. Two people are present: a sports reporter, and MELISSA.

SPORTS REPORTER
Good evening. I am here with
Melissa Yamaguchi, the first
British-Japanese figure skater to
win the championship in Sheffield
with the highest score in the
ladies' programme. Tell us,
Melissa, how does it feel to be
earning this prestigious honour?

MELISSA
It's really amazing, actually. I
could not be any happier to be
earning this honour, and I hope
that I can take part in something
like this again real soon.

SPORTS REPORTER
How does it feel to be taking part
in this competition despite very
little experience that you've had
being involved in figure skating?

MELISSA
I didn't think I was gonna do well,
actually.

(MORE)

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Before I even started my routine today, I found out that my boyfriend was killed in a car accident, and I thought it pretty much affected everything I did on the ice for the championship. I don't know if being emotional during that performance was the reason the judges gave me a really good score, but I can't say I'm entirely sure if that's true or not...

SPORTS REPORTER

I am very sorry for your loss. I hope you don't mind telling us what your previous figure skating experience was like that led you to this unprecedented moment.

MELISSA

I've actually been figure skating for almost a year now. I think you can say that my figure skating is simply a matter of instinct, you know. My mum who works at Sky Sports is a really famous figure skater. I actually got my figure skating off of my mum. She's also my coach, by the way.

SPORTS REPORTER

I see. How did it feel when you got on the ice for your routine? Were you nervous in any way? Were you confident? Did you ever feel that your boyfriend's death might hinder the success of your performance before you even got on the ice? How did it feel?

MELISSA

I was initially nervous at first, but then I thought that when I play the guitar, it calms me of my nerves of all of the things that have been going around in my mind, and it keeps me focused and concentrated, and it helps me make sure I don't mess up somewhere.

SPORTS REPORTER

And how long have you been playing the guitar?

MELISSA

I think I started playing it when I was in fifth or sixth grade; I don't remember. All I can say is that I started playing before I even attended middle school. I actually thought I was gonna make a career out of playing the guitar, but after a lot of consulting with my mother, I think I find this to be my true calling, you know. I don't know how long I'm gonna be doing figure skating like this for the rest of my life, but I couldn't imagine doing anything else!

SPORTS REPORTER

This is only your first major figure skating competition you have ever been involved in, so I would like to ask what the atmosphere was like for you and how this sets you up for what's to come in the future.

MELISSA

Yeah, I think iceSheffield is a very large area if you ask me! I actually thought Hiroko was going to win, but I am going to continue to support her all the way even if she didn't win. I know that I was nervous when I heard that my boyfriend died especially, but I still have a lot of people that continue to help me and support me and push me to do the best that I can so that I can do well in future figure skating performances. Speaking of the future, I really don't know what it's gonna hold for me right now, but I do hope to continue to improve my figure skating abilities by taking part in more events like this real soon... oh, and also playing the guitar, in case I forget!

SPORTS REPORTER

Is there anything else you would like to say before we sign off?

MELISSA

(in Japanese)

Thank you for continuing to support me, everybody! I will do my best in all of my figure skating in the future! Please look forward to it!

INT. ICESHEFFIELD, MAIN ICE RINK - NIGHT

Gala exhibition night. MELISSA performs a stylish figure skating routine to a cheering audience. She also plays on the guitar while figure skating at the same time, if possible.

MELISSA eventually stays for the grand finale. Ladies figure skaters from the programme enter the ice, including AMANDA and HIROKO, assembling together as if part of a synchronised figure skating team. Every female figure skater on the ice does one final performance.

Once the grand finale ends, and everyone in the audience cheers and applauds, those on the ice takes a bow, including MELISSA, who could not be any prouder, confident, nor happier.

CUT TO:

END CREDITS

CUT TO:

EXT. ICESHEFFIELD, PARKING LOT - DAY

MELISSA, in the same setup from the beginning of the film, is still looking up.

She smiles; She has already found her answer. She heads back inside iceSheffield.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: MELISSA ON ICE