

WORK IT

Written by

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FADE IN:

OVER CREDITS:

CLOSE UP of DANCERS' FEET as they STOMP the pavement while an upbeat, hip hop BANGER picks up. Rhythmically, fast. Bursting with style.

Now we see other FEET on a STAGE. They SPIN, they SLIDE, they STOMP in unison. Mesmerizing.

And then, BOOM. Girl's feet-- A pair of plain white Keds move down a hallway. Passing by much cooler kicks belonging to much cooler people. We're in--

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

The feet move across the dirty floor, passing backpacks, lockers.

And we PULL BACK TO REVEAL--

The lovely face of **QUINN ACKERMAN**, 18, the one wearing those Keds. Big glasses, vintage baggy Stanford sweater. Her vibe is intense-phD-student-working-on-her-dissertation. Out-of-place in high school. A modern Brat Pack Molly Ringwald, a post-Millennial Annie Hall. The most interesting person here, but no one knows it yet.

SOME DUDE is horse-playing, doesn't see Quinn, and BODY-SLAMMS into her.

She SMASHES into the lockers, FALLS to the floor, GROANS--
"what the fuck?"

QUINN

Come on, man!

SOME DUDE

Eat my dick, Einstein!

QUINN

I'd have to find it first!

As she collects her fallen books, ANOTHER STUDENT shoots a look in her direction.

QUINN (CONT'D)

I know, I know. I shouldn't emasculate... Though then again, why's it my responsibility as a woman to protect a man's fragile masculinity--

ANOTHER STUDENT
 --You're blocking my shit.

Quinn realizes she landed in front of the student's locker. On Quinn's frustrated face as she picks herself up, we--

MATCH CUT TO:

The clear, perfect face of **FOSTER PEMBROKE**, 17, FALLING PURPOSEFULLY INTO A PILE OF DANCERS, who catch her effortlessly. She's living her best life, glint in her eyes, game face on. She's always on.

PULL BACK--

INT. AUDITORIUM STAGE - DAY

Foster and her DANCE CREW-- GUYS AND GIRLS, athletic cheerleader/dancers-- are competing in a dance competition. Audience going WILD. The crew is rocking the shit out of it.

Foster POPS back up from her crew's arms, LAUNCHES into the next, beautiful movement.

Then the BASS PICKS UP, pushing us from MOMENT TO MOMENT. We quickly see glimpses of--

-The DANCE WORLD-- social, fun. BODIES SWERVING, HIPS ROTATING, DANCERS COMPETING, PEOPLE PARTYING. Professional, recreational. Passionate.

-Quinn playing the CELLO, Quinn studying (slapping vocabulary POST-ITS on her wall). Alone, always alone. Intense. Driven. Real fucking lonely, but doesn't have time to realize it.

-Foster, center of everything, surrounded by her crew, all full of the confidence of popular kids who are peaking exactly now. At school, at parties. She LAUGHS. She DANCES. COMPETES. She perfects her moves, feels that music.

And then, the BIG MOMENT--

INT. QUINN'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Quinn hits SEND on her online STANFORD APPLICATION-- nervous/elated. Her mom, **MARIA**, 30s, cheery but intense, HIGH FIVES her.

The room's filled with STANFORD PARAPHERNALIA. Maria's eyes dart to a framed desk PHOTO-- BABY QUINN, TEENAGE MARIA, TEENAGE GUY (Quinn's dad), posing on Stanford's campus. Maria looks away.

Quinn does a VICTORY DANCE, and immediately TRIPS. Coordinated, she is not. No matter. On Quinn's face-- the biggest, most hopeful smile.

END CREDITS.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Foster travels with her pack of dancers strutting down the hall like she runs the damn place. Actually, she kind of does. We hear snippets of her talking to her crew--

FOSTER

Hon, you're wrong, it's toner,
essence, *then* serum. Trust me. K-
beauty's the shit.

Some GIRLS nod knowingly. One of them, **JASMINE "JAS" HALE**, 18, cool girl, kind of biker-chic, turns away from Foster, hides a YAWN. A bitchy yawn.

Quinn, walking alone like always, passes them. She looks up from her note cards-- practice Stanford interview questions-- and sees the yawn. Jas gives her a wicked smile-- "*ya caught me.*" Then Jas puts her fingers to her lips, mouths "*shh*" and keeps walking.

Quinn kind of stops, looks around. Realizes that was for her. We can tell she's not used to that. She smiles. Cool.

Then CLOSE-UP on Quinn, she talks DIRECTLY TO CAMERA--

QUINN

I'm Quinn Ackerman.
(knowingly)
And I bet you're wondering how I
got here.

PULL BACK, reveal we're in--

INT. LIBRARY - AFTERNOON

And Quinn's actually talking to an unimpressed MALE STUDENT (Chinese-American) sitting across from her.

MALE STUDENT

I'm not.

Quinn's taken aback.

QUINN

You're not?

MALE STUDENT

Nope.

QUINN

But don't you want to hear about my Stanford interview? It's tomorrow, and it's my dream in life--

MALE STUDENT

I literally could not give a shit. Can you please just tutor me? I want to go to the pep rally.

QUINN

Fine. But hey real quick--
(in Mandarin)
Do you want to get dim sum after school?

MALE STUDENT

You speak Mandarin?

QUINN

I learned for this situation.
(realizing)
That's weird, isn't it?

He stares at her a long moment.

MALE STUDENT

Forget it. I'll just fail calc.

He packs up his stuff.

MALE STUDENT (CONT'D)

Your accent is flawless though.

This satisfies Quinn. He leaves.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - LATER

A high school PEP RALLY. Heart-pounding HOUSE MUSIC, STUDENTS in bleachers cheering as the microphone snaps on--

MALE ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Welcome back, Golden Eagles to the first pep rally of the year!... It's the moment you've all been waiting for... Give it up for Global Hip Hop's 2018 State Champions... Your very own... BIRDS OF PREY!

Foster and the ten-member BIRDS OF PREY DANCE CREW take their places--

FREEZING in cheerleader poses-- girls' pom-poms ready.

Foster, LEG high in the air resting on a dancer, steals a glance at another one, GEOFF TURNER, 18, broad shoulders, a future frat boy dick.

Geoff WINKS at her. She pretends to ignore him. Then spreads her legs apart a little more.

The music CUTS OUT.

FOSTER
(yelling)
Ready? O-kay!

The girls RAISE their pom-poms, cheerleader-perfect, big grins. A pause. Anticipation in the air.

Then BOOM! Cardi B's "BARTIER CARDI" suddenly blares through the speakers-- The Birds DROP their poses, TOSS the pom-poms away and erupt in a gritty DANCE NUMBER-- blending hip hop moves with cheer stunts.

The crowd goes crazy, TEACHERS grimace at the lyrics, the SPOTLIGHT holds on Foster. She's the star. Then we travel up the spotlight, into the A/V booth...

INT. A/V BOOTH - SAME

And we see Quinn's expertly running the spotlight. She intently follows Foster with the light, watching her as she SPINS. The dancers float across the floor, now SLOW-MOTION. TURN, SMILE, GRIND, POP, LOCK. Cool, sexy, free.

On Quinn-- surprising herself by how transfixed she suddenly is. We see that secretly, there's something about this she wants-- freedom, camaraderie. She TAPS her foot, off beat.

She smiles. Then abruptly interrupting her thoughts--

MS. ASHLEIGH (O.S.)
Jesus Christ, in my day body rolls
were about freakin' precision. I
can practically see vadge.

Quinn snaps back to attention. MS. ASHLEIGH, a late-40s teacher with acrylic nails, sits on a folding chair next to Quinn, shakes her head and goes back to playing a shitty game on her phone.

Quinn mouths to herself-- "eww."

MS. ASHLEIGH (CONT'D)

Now, when I competed, you couldn't even show butt cheek. Can you imagine?!

QUINN

...I don't want to.

MS. ASHLEIGH

Exactly.

(looking up)

I mean, that's not dance. Who wants to be a part of that?

QUINN

Definitely not me!

But she does. She looks over at Ms. Ashleigh, who's watching the dancers now. It's clear Ms. Ashleigh's lying, too-- she misses this.

They watch together, in a near-daze. They see Jas launching into an awesome SOLO while the rest set up their finale-- a giant HUMAN PYRAMID.

Jas is a crowd-pleaser. Dances with a little less cheerleader spirit and a little more dancer attitude than Foster. But Foster steals a glance at Jas, proud.

A FLICKERING STROBE LIGHT on the gym floor suddenly catches Quinn's attention. She hesitates, but then decides--

QUINN (CONT'D)

I'm going down there. Can you work the spotlight...

MS. ASHLEIGH

Principal Nguyen said a teacher just had to supervise, and I got the short straw. Like someone would steal this shit! If I was running things...

As Ms. Ashleigh continues, Quinn SIGHS, quickly locks the spotlight and rushes out of the room.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - BLEACHERS - CONTINUOUS

Quinn hurries down the steps, fighting through the crowd--

When she TRIPS.

LOSES HER BALANCE, TUMBLES down the bleachers--

ANGLE ON FOSTER, who doesn't see this, practically glowing as she's LIFTED to the top of the pyramid--

Just as Quinn SMASHES INTO THE DANCERS.

The pyramid COLLAPSES-- dancers SPILL onto each other as Foster SLAMS onto the ground, falling next to Quinn.

It's a giant mess of dancers on top of each other. The crowd goes WILD, snapping pics and losing their shit over it.

QUINN

Oh my God, oh my God, I'm sorry!

FOSTER

(wailing)

Owwwww!

Quinn SCRAMBLES FREE, the crowd FREAKING, dancers untangling. Geoff pulls Foster to her feet, she brushes herself off, trying to collect herself, horrified--

GEOFF

You okay, babe?

He protectively looks her over. Another dancer TRINITY, somehow both perky and sour, who's always desperate to win over Foster, rushes over.

TRINITY

Yeah, you okay, Foster?

QUINN

I was trying to fix the strobes!

Foster turns to her, irate, practically hissing--

FOSTER

You think anyone gives a fuck about the strobes?

The crowd of students is silenced. They watch, rapt. The rest of the Birds surround them. Jas, her uniform ripped, but that kind of shit doesn't bother her, sees Quinn looking devastated. Feels kind of bad for her, despite everything.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

State's in five months! What if I broke something?? Do you know how long it takes to recover from a high ankle sprain?!

QUINN

Depending on the severity, two to four weeks is standard...

(off their looks)

Okay, let me just say, I am deeply apologetic--

GEOFF

"Deeply apologetic?" You sound like my dad. You didn't bilk investors out of their retirement. This is serious.

TRINITY

This was practically a hate crime!

JAS

That's not what a hate crime is.

TRINITY

Well, dancers should be a protected class!

FOSTER

Enough!

Everyone shuts up. They all eye Foster, waiting to see what she does. Foster takes a breath, centers herself, quietly repeats her personal mantra--

FOSTER (CONT'D)

"I am fulfilled. I am fearless. And they're all just jealous."

She's instantly back to her #2blessed2bestressed vibe. It's almost creepy. To Quinn, fake sweet--

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Apology accepted. But are you okay, hon? I'd hate for you to be hurt.

She moves deeper into Geoff's arms.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

I mean-- *Who would take care of you?*

Well played-- Quinn suddenly feels very alone. She realizes she's standing by herself. Starting to crumble.

A wiry male TEACHER (MR. K) meekly tries to diffuse--

MR. K
Guys, it seems like it was an
accident, so let's maybe try to--

TRINITY
Jesus, Mr. K, this doesn't concern
you!

MR. K
(nodding)
Sounds good.

He steps away.

JAS
Fos, come on. He's right.

Foster turns. Bristles at the disloyalty. Everyone reacts,
and Jas is a little nervous.

JAS (CONT'D)
It was an accident.

Foster stares her down.

FOSTER
Totally. She didn't mean to ruin
months of practice. It's not like
she can help being such a fuck up.
Right, Jas?

Pointed, testing. Giving her a chance to comply. But Jas
hesitates, a move that even surprises herself. You don't go
against Foster. The rest of the Birds exchange looks. Foster
clearly wasn't expecting this.

TRINITY
Right, Jas?

Quinn looks at Jas, hopeful. Didn't they share a cool moment
earlier? But Jas feels all the eyes on her. Backs down,
reluctantly--

JAS
Right, totally.
(to Quinn)
What a fucking loser.

Ouch. Foster relaxes, satisfied. Loyalty confirmed. Then
Foster gets right in Quinn's face. Quiet. Chill.

FOSTER
You fuck with my shit, we're gonna
have problems.
(MORE)

FOSTER (CONT'D)

You just made an enemy, Quinn Ackerman. Which must be a nice change from no one giving a shit about you.

Foster grins wider. Quinn feels the entire student body staring. Unforgiving, against her. She turns and goes...

We HOLD ON QUINN. She's tense, trying to force a smile-- "gosh aren't I so lame?" but she's breaking, tears spilling over. She escapes out the door, feeling horrible.

QUINN (PRE-LAP)

Today's the day all of your dreams come true.

INT. QUINN'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Quinn's in bed, staring at the ceiling, wide awake.

QUINN

You can do this.

INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Quinn's wearing her business best (suit, Stanford cardinal scarf tied around her neck), being driven by Maria, who wears HOSPITAL SCRUBS. Quinn's giddy/nervous. Maria's a bit more reserved, quizzing Quinn in prep for the interview--

MARIA

Strengths?

QUINN

Intensity, intelligence, drive, warm heart.

MARIA

Weaknesses?

QUINN

Single-mindedness, which...
(as if she invented this concept)
...can be a strength.

Maria weighs whether to say this, then decides to--

MARIA

There are tons of other schools--

QUINN
 (rolling her eyes)
 --Mom, no. It's always been
 Stanford--

MARIA
 --I know--

QUINN
 --I'm going to volunteer at the
 Clinical Genomics program, then
 Stanford Med, then cure diseases
 and make friends--

MARIA
 --I know--

QUINN
 Why are you so unsupportive?

MARIA
 I'm just saying, don't act like
 Harvard and Yale are garbage
 because--

QUINN
 --Most moms would be thrilled their
 kid wants to go close to home--

MARIA
 --of your dad.

The words hang in the air. Finally Quinn quietly speaks--

QUINN
 You make it sound like I'm really
 pathetic.

MARIA
 I just don't want you to... look,
 he'd be proud of you no matter
 what, is all I'm saying.

QUINN
 That's not why--

Maria waves her hand in the air, almost as if to erase the
 conversation--

MARIA
 No, this is... no. Forget it, this
 is it. We're not doing widow/dead
 dad today.

QUINN
Yeah, okay.

MARIA
I got you something.

QUINN
(brightening)
I got you something!

They reach into their bags and pull out nearly identical TRAVEL MUGS-- "STANFORD MOM" for Maria and "STANFORD CLASS OF 2023" for Quinn.

QUINN (CONT'D)
Freshman year. I'm going to drink my coffee under a palm tree in Koret--

MARIA
--I'm going to drink my tea, also in Koret, watching you very creepily--

They LAUGH.

QUINN
Great minds.
(tentatively)
And then, drinking that coffee, I'll meet another student who likes studying, too, and doesn't laugh at my fossil collection? And sticks up for me when the entire school blames me for, say, hypothetically ruining one measly pep rally, when the real culprit is a misproportioned bleacher step length with terrible traction?

MARIA
What?

QUINN
Nothing.

MARIA
You'll find your people. Stanford's going to be full of Quinns. It's going to be great.

Quinn thinks it over, decides her mom is right.

QUINN

Yeah. This is the start of everything.

Quinn grins as they pull onto campus.

INT. STANFORD ADMISSIONS OFFICE - LATER

VERONICA ROSENBERG, late 30s, kind and crunchy, not your typical admissions director. She inhabits her space with a fiery energy, and glides around the room as Quinn talks, unpacking moving boxes of souvenirs from her exotic travels.

Quinn sits in a chair, confident and collected, looks out the window. She sees Koret Plaza and smiles to herself. Then snaps back to attention--

QUINN

...So in conclusion, here, I would have the opportunity to grow. To create. At Stanford, I truly will find a world of... infinite possibility.

Veronica turns, pauses. A FRAMED PAGE from the Stanford brochure hangs on the wall, and it says exactly that.

VERONICA ROSENBERG

You... memorized the admissions brochure?

Oh shit. Is that bad?

QUINN

...Umm, not intentionally. Sometimes I accidentally memorize things...
(trying to spin it)
Because of my dedication.

Veronica says nothing, walks over to the wall, stares at the page. Quinn's uncomfortable, beginning to worry. Veronica pulls the page off the wall, holds it in her hands.

VERONICA ROSENBERG

This was here when I got here.

She DUMPS IT IN THE TRASH. Quinn nearly GASPS.

VERONICA ROSENBERG (CONT'D)

Ms. Ackerman, I'm not interested in the way things were when I got here.

(MORE)

VERONICA ROSENBERG (CONT'D)
 I'm interested in making things
 better now that I am here. So let's
 shake things up, okay?

Veronica smiles brightly.

VERONICA ROSENBERG (CONT'D)
 May I touch you?

Confused, Quinn nods. Veronica GRABS Quinn's shoulders,
 shakes her out.

VERONICA ROSENBERG (CONT'D)
 Relax! This isn't life or death.
 We're just two people talking,
 okay?

Okay! Quinn does actually relax.

VERONICA ROSENBERG (CONT'D)
 So, look. If you memorized the
 brochure, which, Lord bless you, I
 could barely get through myself,
 then you know we're looking for
 personal context. So tell me
 something about you, as a person.

Quinn nods, she's got this.

QUINN
 Stanford has been my dream my
 entire life. I'm currently first in
 my class. I'm a National Merit
 Scholar, I have a 4.5 GPA, and I
 volunteer at the hospital where my
 mom works.
 (excitedly)
 I get to file paperwork!

Veronica's silent. Quinn presses on--

QUINN (CONT'D)
 ...And I'm in Academic Decathlon, I
 clean the gravestones in an
 abandoned, low-income cemetery in
 my spare time... Also, my strengths
as a person are my intelligence--

VERONICA ROSENBERG
 (frowning)
 I'm going to stop you right there.

Quinn panics as the mood shifts. Veronica grabs a pile of
 applications, drops them in front of Quinn one by one.

VERONICA ROSENBERG (CONT'D)
 Academic Decathlon. National Merit
 Scholar. Volunteers. Every
 applicant. Nearly identical.

Quinn's face falls. But wait! Hopeful--

QUINN
 But do they also play the--

VERONICA ROSENBERG
 --Cello? Yes.
 (disgusted, bewildered)
 All of them.

Fuck.

VERONICA ROSENBERG (CONT'D)
 You read that study in the New
 Yorker that says 25% of students
 play an instrument, right?

Quinn nods weakly.

VERONICA ROSENBERG (CONT'D)
 And you hate it, don't you? I bet
 you just memorize the notes and
 play them.

Shell-shocked, Quinn nods again.

VERONICA ROSENBERG (CONT'D)
 You're great on paper...

Quinn's utterly losing her mind. She feels everything
 slipping through her fingers...

VERONICA ROSENBERG (CONT'D)
 But Ms. Ackerman, every student
 here is great on paper. We're
 looking for more.

A desperate move--

QUINN
 My mom was a teen mom. She wanted
 to go to Stanford--

VERONICA ROSENBERG
 --That's her. We're talking about
 you.

Veronica moves around the room, gesturing, demonstrating.

VERONICA ROSENBERG (CONT'D)
 I'm looking for passion. Grit. What
 gets you out of bed in the morning?
 What lights your soul on fire?

Quinn looks wholly devastated. Total loss for words.

VERONICA ROSENBERG (CONT'D)
 Do you understand what I'm saying?
 This whole damn world is falling
 apart, and I'm looking for the
 change-makers. The risk-takers.
 Checking all the right boxes is
 conventional, and I want
 exceptional. Someone who feels
 strongly. Lives proudly. You're
 young-- this is the time you should
 be excited to get your hands dirty.
 What drives you?

Veronica gets right in Quinn's face.

VERONICA ROSENBERG (CONT'D)
 Ms. Ackerman, who are you?

Quinn has No. Fucking. Clue. She looks down, nearly choking
 back tears. Realizing her entire life was a miscalculation.
 She opens her mouth, then admits--

QUINN
 I... don't know.

Veronica's disappointed.

VERONICA ROSENBERG
 Without even an inkling of your
 inner core...

The worst shit Quinn could ever imagine--

VERONICA ROSENBERG (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry, I just don't think
 you're Stanford material.

It hits Quinn like a ton of bricks. Complete anguish.

INT. OUTER ADMISSIONS OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Quinn exits Veronica's office in a daze and moves through the
 outer office, where a few desks of ADMISSIONS STAFF try to
 avoid eye contact. She's shell-shocked.

An ADMISSIONS WOMAN at a desk whispers to another--

ADMISSIONS WOMAN
Should we call someone...?

ADMISSIONS MAN
You're new. This happens. I call
the office the "Dream
Slaughterhouse."
(explaining)
It's where dreams go to die.

ADMISSIONS WOMAN
Yeah, I got it.

Quinn hears this just as her hand touches the exit door. It stops her cold. She turns around.

QUINN
Dream Slaughterhouse.

ADMISSIONS MAN
(whispering)
How loud was I talking??

Quinn processes. Thinks. Finally--

QUINN
My dreams don't die.

She turns to the Admissions Man.

QUINN (CONT'D)
My dreams live.

She wipes the tears from her eyes. Is suddenly focused. Determined. Maybe a little crazy now.

QUINN (CONT'D)
(to nobody in particular)
You want passion? I'll show you
passion! I bleed Cardinal!

Quinn's eyes dart around. Spots POST-ITS on the Admissions Woman's desk. Takes OFF HER HEELS and marches over.

QUINN (CONT'D)
Can I...?

Quinn grabs the post-its and a pen.

ADMISSION WOMAN
I'd rather you didn't--

But Quinn's already stomping over to a WALL OF WINDOWS. She scribbles something furiously on the post-it. SLAM. STICKS it onto the window. It says-- "*Passion.*"

She stares at it. Doesn't notice all the eyes on her. Writes another one. SLAM. "*Who are you?*"

ADMISSIONS WOMAN
...What is happening?

ANOTHER WOMAN shushes her.

ANOTHER WOMAN
This is like "*A Beautiful Mind.*"

She watches, munching on M&Ms. SLAM. "*Personal context.*"
Another. SLAM. "*Art?*"

QUINN
(muttering)
Boring.

SLAM. "*Music?*"

QUINN (CONT'D)
Already failed.

ADMISSIONS WOMAN
(tentatively)
Jewelry making?

Quinn nods, adds it to the wall. The rest of the staff smiles, congratulating Admissions Woman. Great idea!

Quickly-- "*Unique.*" "*Challenging but doable.*" "*Unexpected.*" "*Genuine.*" "*Real.*"

QUINN
What have you always wanted to do?

She pauses. Thinks. Smiles to herself. Inspiration.

Back to her old self instantly. Determined. Slips her heels back on. She struts back toward Veronica's office. Flings open the door, bursts inside, shuts it behind her.

ADMISSIONS MAN
(left hanging)
Oh come on!

INT. STANFORD ADMISSIONS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Quinn sputters out the words to Veronica--

QUINN

Dance!!

VERONICA ROSENBERG

What?

QUINN

(determined)

I'm going to become a dancer. I've always wanted to dance. I never told anyone.

Veronica puts the books down. Now this is interesting.

VERONICA ROSENBERG

And you just remembered this? This can't be another box to check.

QUINN

I'm all in. I promise.

VERONICA ROSENBERG

This is real?

Quinn's mind races.

QUINN

I'll show you. You can see me dance. State championship. Five months.

VERONICA ROSENBERG

...You're going to make it to State? Can you dance at all?

QUINN

I can't walk down bleachers without tripping. But you want students who face challenges head on. This is me putting my neck on the line. I'm going to State...

Quinn thinks. She's either a genius or reckless or both--

QUINN (CONT'D)

And I'm going to win.

Quinn stares straight at Veronica. This is Quinn at her best. At her most alive. Veronica leans back, impressed, but still maybe a bit skeptical.

VERONICA ROSENBERG

That I would like to see.

Relief.

VERONICA ROSENBERG (CONT'D)
Good luck, Ms. Ackerman.

QUINN
Thank you. But luck is for the ill-
prepared. I'll see you at State.

Quinn marches out of the office, unbelievably giddy, closes the door behind her.

INT. OUTER ADMISSIONS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Quinn triumphantly returns the post-its and pen to the Admissions Woman's desk.

ADMISSIONS MAN
What happened?

QUINN
What happened is all my dreams are
coming true!

Quinn exits. A beat.

ADMISSIONS MAN
Okay, but what the fuck does that
mean?

INT. QUINN'S KITCHEN - LATER

Quinn enters. Maria, in a panic, is hot on her heels.

MARIA
Explain it to me again, Quinn.
Explain to me exactly.

QUINN
I told you. They were going to
reject me. What choice did I have?

MARIA
Not volunteering to become an award-
winning dancer overnight is a
start!

Quinn's confidence is starting to fade.

QUINN
Well it made sense at the time!
(confessing)
(MORE)

QUINN (CONT'D)

I always thought dancing seemed really fun.

MARIA

Then you take a class at the Y!

QUINN

I don't have time for that! I don't have time for anything! I haven't even learned to drive! I'm too busy studying for the SATs and sending tampons to Uganda because it looks good on an application, just like everyone else. You were right about one thing. Stanford is full of a ton of Quinns. *And that's the problem.*

MARIA

Well, excuse me for thinking that grades and volunteering matter when it comes to getting into college.

QUINN

Maybe it did in ancient times.

MARIA

The early 2000s were not ancient times.

QUINN

You didn't even have Netflix!

MARIA

(firing back)

We did! It's how we rented DVDs!

QUINN

(furious, bewildered)

What!?

Maria takes a breath. Tries to regroup.

MARIA

I'm just going to say something--

QUINN

I'm going to Stanford. This is my dream. This no-passion thing is going to be a problem at any school I'd apply to anyway.

As sweetly as she can--

MARIA

Quinn, I love you. But you're not coordinated. You broke your ankle trying to hula hoop! *Last year.*

QUINN

I know when I broke my ankle, Mom. Why are you always throwing that in my face?

MARIA

Because putting all your attention to dance, instead of focusing on another school, or reframing your interview answers, *is too risky.*

QUINN

I'm not a moron. I have a plan. Foster Pembroke and her dance group win state hip hop champion every year, and auditions are coming up, so I'll just join them. State's right before the regular admission deadline. It's perfect. Soon I'll be like, "wobble, wobble, turn" like a regular...

She struggles to think of an example.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Famous dancer person.

Quinn does a little shimmy, trying to replicate Foster's dance. It's terrible. Maria's worried.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Well I haven't learned how to do it yet! Mom, you have to trust me.

Maria's starting to give in. Or give up.

MARIA

But how do you expect to do this?

QUINN

Through what I do best.

Quinn looks off to the sky. Empowered.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Research and organization.

INT. QUINN'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Quinn enters, focused and fired up, lugging dance theory books. They replace science and cello books on her shelves.

She moves to her bulletin board. Stares at a picture of Neil deGrasse Tyson. Then replaces his pic with Beyonce's.

She pulls out her laptop and watches some clips of last year's GHH state competition.

The dancers are professional, mesmerizing, and intimidating. The Birds in competition mode are stunning.

Uh-oh. Quinn's worried, but holds it together. Gives herself a pep talk--

QUINN

They're not that good! You can do this. It's like, angles and numbers and pattern symmetry. Fun stuff!

INT. QUINN'S GARAGE - LATER

Quinn, dressed in athletic gear, stands in front of her laptop, watching a Youtube dance tutorial, excited, hopeful.

YOUTUBE DANCER

Hey beginners, first we're gonna do a basic "step and drop your shoulder." This is a great move for beginners because it's something anyone can do.

He demonstrates. Quinn attempts-- She's awful. Like robotic. No rhythm. This is... a problem.

INT. QUINN'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Quinn's engrossed in *Step Up*, taking detailed notes-- "*Action Item: Improve dance skills.*" Maria watches Quinn from the doorway, looking concerned.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Headphones on and sitting at a desk filled with papers, Quinn's watching old GHH competitions on her laptop. Measuring angles, keeping time. She's taking notes with the precision of a scientist, analyzing styles, moves, and scores. She's having a blast.

INT. QUINN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Quinn's stuffing TAMPONS in care packages while (badly) dancing around her living room.

INT. BUS (MOVING) - AFTERNOON

Quinn's watching another clip as she rides the bus home. She looks up-- something outside catches her eye.

It's a YARD SALE. A bunch of shitty old full-length MIRRORS for sale. She quickly PULLS THE CORD and runs off the bus.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

Quinn struggles down the sidewalk, lugging the mirrors home.

INT. QUINN'S GARAGE - LATER

Quinn moves her cello and sheet music out of the way. Sets up the mirrors against the wall, lined up next to each other, different sizes and shapes-- a makeshift dance studio.

She pulls out her phone and presses PLAY on another Youtube tutorial. Now she can watch herself in the mirrors. She tries a sequence again. And again. And again. Slight improvement from before. This girl does not give up.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Quinn's in a candy striper uniform, listening to MUSIC on her headphones, pushing a FLOWER CART.

INT. QUINN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Quinn slips a ticket to Global Hip Hop's State Competition into an envelope. Addresses it to VERONICA ROSENBERG.

She glances at her calendar. On tomorrow's date--
"AUDITIONS!!"

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Quinn, in workout gear, nervously walks down the hall.

QUINN

You can do this. Are you the best dancer in the world? Of course not. But you'll work hard.

Passes a sign-- "*Birds of Prey Auditions*" with an arrow.

QUINN (CONT'D)

You are Beyonce before the "Single Ladies" video. And the "Formation" video. And "Lemonade" and also the Superbowl. You are all Beyonces.

Quinn rounds the corner and sees a ton of high schoolers there to audition. Everyone seems to know each other.

Quinn's starting to panic. But she takes a breath, gets in line, listens in on the GUY and GIRL behind her. They see Jas up ahead at the table, signing dancers in.

GIRL

Why's Jas doing grunt-work shit? Make a freshman do it, they're hardly people.

GUY

Classic Foster's Freeze.

GIRL

But they've been besties forev.

GUY

Then Jas shouldn't have pissed her off. You don't stand up for the freak who tries to Tonya Harding your principal dancer and expect to go back to being BFFs.

Quinn frowns. The Girl looks around. Coast is clear--

GIRL

(mouthing, barely audible)
Jas's isolations are tighter.

Guy reacts, looking around suspiciously.

GUY

Shut up! Anyone could tell her you said that!

They notice Quinn suddenly, who quickly pretends she wasn't listening. But Quinn's a nobody to them, and they don't recognize her as the "freak."

GUY (CONT'D)

I'm not jinxing anything. Twenty-five-K prize for state and it's the Birds, baby girl. I'd do anything to get on this crew. I'd kill you.

Girl LAUGHS, but he doesn't. She's weirded out. Quinn's feeling uneasy. Looks around at all the professional-type dancers. Maybe this was a mistake. She's maybe about to bolt, but it's her turn to sign in. Jas sees her, reacts--

JAS

You need to leave. Now.

The fighter in Quinn perks up.

QUINN

I have just as much right to be here as anyone.

JAS

Foster's gonna disagree.

QUINN

She can't deny my effort.

JAS

You met her, right?

QUINN

If you know she's so terrible, why do you put up with her?

JAS

(uncomfortable)

We're the best. She makes us the best.

GUY

Hellooo, what's the hold-up?

Jas quickly hands Quinn an AUDITION NUMBER and motions for her to go inside. Quinn takes a breath--

QUINN

You got this. How bad could it be?

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - LATER

Pretty fucking bad. At the front of the room, the Birds led by Foster, perform/teach an ELABORATE, DIZZYING ROUTINE. A group of auditioners follow/learn the moves. When it's over--

FOSTER
 ...and that's the piece, got it?

CROWD
 Got it!

In the back of the crowd, Quinn, dripping in sweat and choking for air--

QUINN
 Got... it...

Foster continues on like she's giving a fucking TED Talk--

FOSTER
 Bird hopefuls, I want to tell you a story. Every morning I jog through the worst neighborhood in town as a reminder: We're all one step a way from failure. Blake Lively says "failure is not an option, and if it is, you're not trying hard enough," and I could not agree more. We've won State three years in a row. A four-peat at GHH is unprecedented. But this year, I don't want to win.

Everyone murmurs, confused. She pauses for dramatic effect--

FOSTER (CONT'D)
 I want to crush the competition. I want to smash their bones with my feet!

The dancers erupt in CHEERS as Quinn DOUBLES OVER, still trying to catch her breath. Foster notices this. Strains to get a better look, then recognizes Quinn. Jesus Christ.

FOSTER (CONT'D)
 Oh my God, seriously? Are you actively trying to ruin my life?

Everyone stares at Quinn accusatorily as she gets up.

QUINN
 No. I'm here to audition.

Foster can barely process this information. The Birds exchange looks.

TRINITY
 But... why? It's going to be super embarrassing for you--

A devilish smile spreads across Foster's face.

FOSTER

Trinity, we can't deny a fellow Golden Eagle her chance to soar, now can we?

TRINITY

(whispering, confused)
I think we can cuz we hate her.

GEOFF

Fuck, Trinity. Get a hobby or something.

FOSTER

Well, Quinn Ackerman. You're up first.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Quinn's practically shaking in front of the room, standing with a handful of other dancers. All ready to audition. Everyone's staring squarely at her. MUSIC turns on.

FOSTER

And, five, six, seven, eight!

Go! They START THE ROUTINE, Foster calling out the steps--

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Turn, and step, hair flip...

Quinn immediately falls behind. She's stilted, slow, lacks rhythm. TURN. ARM OUT. DOUBLE TAP. She whispers the count to herself. Completely in her own world.

It's excruciating. She misses steps. Can't keep up. BUMPS into people. She can't seem to blend the steps together. Then she TRIPS, falling to the ground. The audience stifles laughter. Picks herself up, continues.

And now, big finish-- SPIN, SHOULDER RAISES, and DROP TO THE GROUND. BOOM.

Quinn SPINS two beats after everyone else and TRIPS, FALLING onto the floor, SMASHING her shoulder. She scrambles up (after everyone already DROPPED), embarrassingly completes her SHOULDER RAISES and then DROPS again, joining everyone on the ground.

No one can hold it in anymore. They EXPLODE IN LAUGHTER. Quinn's mortified. Foster, trying to calm down--

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Stop, stop. This is so mean!

(to Quinn)

I'm sorry. It's just, oh my God, I haven't laughed like that since Trinity got bangs.

Trinity frowns. We see Jas slip into the room. Quinn's teary, panicking, stands up.

QUINN

Okay, I suck. But I tried. Don't you want people who work hard? I couldn't dance at all before.

GEOFF

You can't dance at all now. It was like a slow-motion stroke.

FOSTER

Now, babe. She did try her best. I guess that's what makes it so sad.

GEOFF

What a train wreck.

Foster nods, makes a "crash" noise.

TRINITY

Totally.

Trinity then makes a more elaborate "crash" noise, complete with an explosion, flames, and people screaming ("*Help! My son is still on board!*"). It is super weird.

Quinn tries desperately to regroup. Pleads her case--

QUINN

I can be an asset. I analyzed all the wins over the last ten years, and I noticed the judges are increasingly favoring a more lyrical style...

On Jas, impressed, and feeling bad for Quinn.

QUINN (CONT'D)

And yes you've been winning, but your scores have been dropping by more than a standard deviation, I think because of the predictability and rigidity of your routines--

FOSTER

Hon, I'm going to stop you right there. We're killing it, and doing it without your pie charts. So we'll stick to dance, you stick to... gosh, I don't know, building a robot to be your friend?

GEOFF

If you want to dance this badly, maybe try the adult rehab center.

TRINITY

You can have your own little movement group.

Wait. Quinn looks up.

QUINN

My own group.

TRINITY

(annoyed)

That's what I said.

Quinn's mind races. Planning. Steps ahead already. Smiles. Flush with excitement.

GEOFF

What are you even--

QUINN

--I'm going to start my own crew.

The Birds LAUGH.

QUINN (CONT'D)

You don't want my research, fine. But facts are facts. And besides, factually, it's proven that positive feedback is more motivating than negative. My crew's going to be about lifting people up, not tearing them down.

On Jas, intrigued.

GEOFF

Wow cool psych lesson.

(to the crowd)

Anyone here impressed? Anyone want to be in her crew?

No one says anything. It's the loudest silence you've ever heard. Quinn's starting to freak. A million eyes just stare.

FOSTER

Face it. No one wants to be a part of your lame, weird, nothing--

JAS (O.S.)

I do.

Everyone turns, utterly stunned.

TRINITY

Excuse me?

JAS

I'm joining.

Quinn can't believe it. Foster's eyes narrow.

FOSTER

You didn't even see her dance!
She's a joke.

JAS

You think everyone sucks. She went up against you, that's a badass chick right there.

(then)

Come on, ya know she's right. We're getting stale. Vanilla.

Everyone reacts.

FOSTER

Oh, I'm so offended. You think I'm the most classic, universal flavor there is.

But she is offended. Hurt. She tries to cover.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Fine, whatever. Let someone else carry you. My arms are fucking tired.

JAS

(just as hurt)

Fos--

Foster gets right into Jas's face.

FOSTER

I'm stale? Your shit is mid-90s at best.

Jas's narrow. She does a BACK FLIP, SPINS, ANIMATES HER BODY, then FLIPS HER HAIR like it was nothing. But it was damn good. A reminder to all of them.

JAS

See ya at State.

FOSTER

(vicious)

Don't come crying to me when this blows up in your pretty little face.

Jas, a little scared now but hides it, turns and heads to the door. Quinn just stands there in shock. Jas shoots her a look, urgent. Quinn rushes after her.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Quinn follows Jas as she moves through the parking lot. Jas grows angrier by the minute.

JAS

Everyone thinks she's Beyonce or some shit. News flash: ya ain't Beyonce.

Quinn's watching Jas, totally amazed.

JAS (CONT'D)

We'll get the best dancers. Foster never thinks outside the box. Well, we're gonna blow up the fucking box.

QUINN

Why'd you do that for me?

Jas turns to Quinn as she reaches her beater.

JAS

Foster uses people. Uses me to win, and I'm sick of it. You don't use people, do you Quinn?

Jas stares her down, and Quinn's terrified.

QUINN

No. Definitely not.

Jas looks around to make sure no one's listening.

JAS
I'm gonna tell you something almost
no one knows...

Jas pulls her in close, revealing her deepest, darkest secret.

JAS (CONT'D)
I wanna open my own dance studio
some day. So I need this prize
money. Dance is my ticket.

Quinn pauses.

QUINN
...I just met you, so I can't
really evaluate whether this is a
big deal...

JAS
Well it is. So don't fuck this up
for me, okay?

Yikes. Quinn nods. Jas gets in the car and peels away.

CUT TO:

A VIDEO ON YOUTUBE--

*It's a five-year-old video of a dancer, fifteen at the time. This is **DRAKE RAMIREZ**. He's dancing on stage, doing a solo at GHH's competition. Holy shit, he's amazing. Captivating. A teenager, but dances with a passion beyond his years.*

We CLICK to another one. Then another. And then the last one, GHH's State Competition from two years ago--

Drake's on stage. The crowd's going nuts. Award-winning for sure. And then, he JUMPS, KICKS his leg out, and LANDS. Badly. His LEG GIVES OUT and he HITS THE FLOOR. Clutching his leg in pain.

The audience collectively GASPS. It's truly gruesome. His crew stops, attends to him. Medics rush in. The video ends.

There are no more videos after that.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Quinn looks up from her phone, having just watched the videos. She's mesmerized by Drake. Then she sees Jas across the way, coming down the aisle.

Jas passes Foster's table. She and Foster briefly make painful eye contact, but JAS KEEPS WALKING.

She plops herself down across from Quinn and starts eating. Quinn hides a little smile-- she has a friend! Foster watches them, pissed. Between bites--

JAS

So. Dancers.

Quinn flips through her phone, then hands it over.

QUINN

One step ahead of you. I posted on the school listserve about auditions.

JAS

What's that?

QUINN

Uh, the official online school information portal. You don't check it?

Jas shakes her head no.

QUINN (CONT'D)

How do you know when they're repaving the parking lot?

JAS

Does it look like I give a shit about repaving the parking lot?

QUINN

So what's your brilliant idea then?

Jas stands up.

JAS

Follow me.

Quinn hesitates. Off Jas's look--

JAS (CONT'D)
 You're a rules girl. Got it. But
 I'm not. You wanna find the best
 dancers, you gotta trust me.

Reluctantly, Quinn follows.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Quinn trails Jas who moves quickly down the hall.

QUINN
 At least tell me--

They turn the corner, and Jas stops at a window into a classroom. Inside, we see it's a MUSIC CLASSROOM filled with INSTRUMENTS and MUSIC PRODUCTION EQUIPMENT. A few students are spread out, working on various projects.

JAS
 There.

She's pointing to **LEO**, 15, headphones on, working at a DJ CONTROLLER. He's a little awkward and unassuming, not your typical DJ type.

QUINN
 What does this have to--

Suddenly, Leo starts BREAKING. Moving to the music, eyes closed, in his own world. He's fabulous.

QUINN (CONT'D)
 Whoa.

INT. MUSIC CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Quinn and Jas now talk to Leo, but he doesn't look happy.

JAS
 Come on, Leo. It's 25k.

LEO
 If you win. Which you won't.

QUINN
 I have a fail-proof algorithm.

LEO
 (sarcastic)
 Ohhh, an algorithm. Of course!
 (MORE)

LEO (CONT'D)
 (then)
 What's an algorithm?

Quinn prepares to launch into a lengthy explanation--

JAS
 It means, we're building a dream team. And you're the best breaker I know.

LEO
 Then you know I don't dance in front of people. And why would I go looking for trouble from Foster?

JAS
 To show her up. She'd be crushed if we beat her.

This kind of intrigues Leo. Quinn seizes on this.

QUINN
 Devastated. You'd finally get back at her for...
 (guessing)
 Humiliating you in elementary school?

Leo nods.

LEO
 She changed my yearbook picture to a hedgehog.
 (explaining)
 She said I looked like a hedgehog.

QUINN
 But you're not a hedgehog.

LEO
 I'm not.
 (then, to Jas)
 And you really quit? Just like that?

JAS
 Yeah, and I didn't do it to sit on my ass. I'm coming to win.

Leo thinks this over.

LEO
 If we swing at Foster, we can't miss.

JAS
We're gonna stomp her.

Leo smiles.

LEO
Then when do we start?

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

Quinn's in class, slyly reading article after article on her phone-- "*How to Start a Dance Crew,*" "*Hip Hop Styles,*" etc."

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Quinn and Jas spy on a group of alternative-type STUDENTS who are blasting music on their phones, DANCING and jamming out behind the school. Quinn and Jas watch, impressed.

Jas joins in, dancing with them. They cheer her on. She motions for Quinn to do the same. Quinn does a quick SLIDE AND DROP THE SHOULDER. It's better than before, and she makes a goofy face to seem like she sucks on purpose. It works.

INT. QUINN'S GARAGE - AFTERNOON

In her garage, Quinn post-its up her mirrors-- "*Lyrical.*" "*Breaking.*" "*Animation.*" "*Trained dancer.*" "*Street dancer.*" "*Choreographer.*" "*Show stopper.*"

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Quinn and Jas eat lunch, a tentative comfort between them.

JAS
Check this out.

Jas hands Quinn her phone, open to the musical.ly app.

It's a video of REESE, 18, non-binary, oozes cool, fashion-forward, lip-syncing "BAD AT LOVE" by Halsey while dancing a slowed-down robotic routine. It's awesome.

JAS (CONT'D)
They go to our school. We're meeting after last bell.

QUINN
Well lucky for you, my student council meeting got pushed!

JAS
That is lucky.

QUINN
I know you think it's lame.

JAS
I don't. But you got a lot on your plate, but you don't seem to get, dance is the plate. And the meal.

QUINN
(nodding)
And the table.

JAS
What? No. There's no fucking table.

QUINN
Then where does the plate go?

Jas is suddenly suspicious.

JAS
Are you really serious about this?

QUINN
Of course. Dance is my life. Why else would I be doing this?

This satisfies Jas. Quinn's worried.

EXT. PARK - LATER

Reese is standing around waiting for them. Quinn and Jas walk up. This is kind of weird.

REESE
Hey. You're starting a new crew?

They nod.

REESE (CONT'D)
So just get to it?

Reese does their thing-- dancing more elaborate and spectacular than before. Reese stares at Jas with piercing eyes, and Jas is a little mesmerized. When Reese is done--

REESE (CONT'D)
So was that cool?

Quinn and Jas nod.

REESE (CONT'D)

Cool. So who else is in this crew?

WE SEE OUR CREW WATCHING, APPROACHING, FINDING OTHER DANCERS IN QUICK SHOTS-- TEENAGERS DANCING IN THE STREETS, OTHERS MOVING IN GYM CLASS.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - LATER

Quinn and Jas observe some dancers in a hip hop class.

JAS

There. Dude in the tank with the sick circle glides. He's in my history class.

Quinn nods, pretending to know who she means.

QUINN

We still need a teacher sponsor.
And I know just who to get.

INT. MS. ASHLEIGH'S CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

Quinn, Jas, Leo, and Reese enter a classroom. It's after school, and the classroom is empty except for Ms. Ashleigh grading papers at her desk and a mopey TEENAGE GIRL laying on the floor, snapping on her phone.

MS. ASHLEIGH

(without looking up)
Detention's in Room 1006.

QUINN

We're not here for detention.

LEO

We're here for dance!

Ms. Ashleigh looks at them now.

QUINN

We want you to be our sponsor.
We're competing at GHH.

MS. ASHLEIGH

(surprised)
You're going up against the Birds?
Are you stupid?

REESE

Are teachers supposed to talk like that?

MS. ASHLEIGH

Sorry. You're all unique and special and if you ever feel triggered I'm here to talk or can direct you to a mental health professional. But also, are you stupid? *It's the Birds.*

QUINN

We'll be fine.

LEO

She has an algorithm, which is math.

JAS

Winning teacher sponsor gets a lot of cred.

MS. ASHLEIGH

(ruefully)

Mr. K thinks he's so damn great. He brings that trophy to the teacher's lounge every year. Like we get it, you stand around doing nothing very successfully.

QUINN

You want to be principal someday, you're going to have to be involved in extracurriculars.

MS. ASHLEIGH

Who said I wanted to be principal?

QUINN

You did. In the A/V booth.

MS. ASHLEIGH

I didn't mean literally...

But maybe she did. She coming around to the idea.

MS. ASHLEIGH (CONT'D)

(to Jas)

If I do this, we need to work on those body rolls.

Quinn smiles.

JAS
Hey where do you get off--

QUINN
--Jas--

MS. ASHLEIGH
--I know what I'm talking about.

Ms. Ashleigh's hits PLAY on her phone and Paula Abdul's "STRAIGHT UP" blasts. She launches into a old-fashioned cheerleader/dance team ROUTINE that's surprisingly great. She ends it with PERFECT BODY ROLLS. The crew's impressed.

TEENAGE GIRL
Gross. You're like 100.

MS. ASHLEIGH
Well "100" is pretty good, right, Sophie? It's one of the emojis.

SOPHIE
I didn't mean it like the emoji. I meant it like you're old.

MS. ASHLEIGH
(to the crew)
That's my daughter. She's a freshman, but I gotta keep my eye on her.
(confiding)
She keeps cyberbullying Miley Cyrus.

SOPHIE
For the last time, I am catfishing Miley Cyrus! And she started it!

The crew is weirded out. Ms. Ashleigh surveys the crew.

MS. ASHLEIGH
You're gonna need more.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

We see a bunch of DANCERS auditioning, some good, some bad, all cut together.

Quinn, Jas, and the rest of the crew watch carefully, pleased with the crew they're building.

INT. QUINN'S GARAGE - AFTERNOON

CLOSE-UP of the mirrors: Quinn adds "Reese" under "Animator," "Leo" under "Breaker," and "Ms. Ashleigh" under "Sponsor." We see every spot is filled out, except for two-- "Choreographer" and "Show stopper."

QUINN (PRE-LAP)
Congratulations!

INT. MS. ASHLEIGH'S CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

The crew-- Quinn, Jas, Leo, Reese, a handful of others, and Ms. Ashleigh (with Sophie texting in the background) gather for their first crew meeting. All excited, rearing to go. Quinn passes out agendas.

QUINN
You're the inaugural members of a brand-new dance crew, name TBD!

Everyone CHEERS.

LEO
I like the name-- TBD. Very mysterious.

QUINN
It stands for "to be determined."
(then)
Our name isn't "TBD."

JAS
Leo, you're doing our music. Reese got costumes.

QUINN
No wait, I want to go back to this. Leo, you do understand that when I say "TBD"--

JAS
We picked you all because you're at the top of your respective styles.

REESE
(re: Quinn)
What's she the top of?

QUINN
(panicked)
Isn't it obvious?
(MORE)

QUINN (CONT'D)
 (re: the agendas)
 This!

They stare blankly at her.

QUINN (CONT'D)
 Organization. Management.

Still nothing.

QUINN (CONT'D)
 Also dance. I'm an amazing dancer,
 but I needed a new crew. See,
 Imelda, Jessica, Trace, Coralie,
 and I broke up a year ago.
 (shaking her head)
 Coralie was such a drama queen. She
 thought she was so cool because she
 danced for Meghan Trainor! But it
 wasn't even a stadium tour. She's
 no Kaelyn Harris, you know?

They do know. They nod, satisfied.

MS. ASHLEIGH
 May I suggest that you guys like,
 get to the dancing, though? Back in
 my dance days--

REESE
 (examining the agenda)
 It says here "show stopper" and
 "choreographer" and then it's
 blank...

QUINN
 Well, that is jumping ahead, but I
 might as well get into it. I don't
 have a show stopper yet but...
 (proudly, big breath)
 I'm going to get Drake Ramirez to
 be our choreographer.

Everyone reacts in disbelief.

JAS
 Wait, what?

REESE
 Drake? Ramirez?

LEO
 No freaking way.

QUINN

Why not?

LEO

It's *Drake Ramirez*. He doesn't dance anymore. He's not even a choreographer.

Everyone else nods in agreement.

JAS

No one's heard from him since he tore his ACL two years ago. He quit dance all together.

LEO

He ghosted the whole world.

REESE

My ex said they saw him at the local community college.
(disgusted)
Taking classes in hotel management.

JAS

Nuh uh.

QUINN

Well, I found him.

No fucking way.

MS. ASHLEIGH

You're joking.

QUINN

I found his old instagram account. Checked all his geotags. Made an algorithm of locations. Then from there it was a simple mapping...
(off their looks)
This is what I do.

JAS

Stalk the shit out of people?

QUINN

Make things happen. All we have to do is convince him.

MS. ASHLEIGH

It's not going to work. Drake Ramirez is cool and mysterious.

(MORE)

MS. ASHLEIGH (CONT'D)
Cool and mysterious guys don't just
help strangers for the hell of it.

JAS
Drake Ramirez WAS dance. No way is
he just gonna jump back into that
world because you ask nice.

LEO
I can't believe you found Drake.
Whatever he's doing, it must be so
freaking cool.

INT. LITTLE MISS MUFFET'S DANCE STUDIO - DAY

Little GIRLS and BOYS with too much dramatic energy over-
perform a dance to a Kidz Bop version of N.E.R.D. and
Rihanna's "LEMON."

As they're shimmying around under a DANCE TEACHER's guidance,
the TBDS enter the back of the room, looking around. The
dancers part, drifting away, revealing--

QUINN
Drake Ramirez?

And then we see him. He's wiping down the mirrors. He's older
now. He's a fucking man. Looks up, into the mirror. Sees
Quinn's reflection behind him.

They stare at each other, intrigued, and he turns. Drake
Ramirez in the flesh. Snapping us out of this daze--

DANCE TEACHER
Umm, get the hell out of here?!

Drake starts walking toward them. Toward her. Tunnel vision.
Quinn's face reddens, but she recovers, marches to him. About
to speak--

DANCE TEACHER (CONT'D)
No seriously, we can't just let
strangers watch a child's dance
class!

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

The TBDS and Drake stand in the parking lot now.

QUINN
I'm Quinn Ackerman. I've started a
dance crew--

He hardens.

DRAKE
Not interested.

He starts heading back inside.

JAS
I told ya this wouldn't work...

Quinn holds her hand up-- "I got this."

QUINN
We'd like you to be our
choreographer for the following
reasons.

Drake turns around. Actually kind of curious.

QUINN (CONT'D)
One, according to my research of
every dance movie on Netflix, we
have a very important ingredient
for winning: a can-do spirit.

He LAUGHS at her. Off her look--

DRAKE
That's not how dance works.

QUINN
Then help us.

DRAKE
Dance is in my rearview.

QUINN
At least let me go through the rest
of my list. Two, this is your
chance to overcome your demons.
(explaining)
Due to your injury.

Oh, fuck. Everyone gets tense. Drake pauses, takes the agenda from her hands, studies it. Looks at Quinn, then RIPS THE PAPER IN HALF. Quinn GASPS.

DRAKE
I'm not reading an agenda.

QUINN
Oh.
(whispering)
Can you not read?

Jas shakes her head-- that was not good. Drake gets in Quinn's face.

DRAKE
Don't come back here.

He heads back to the door.

QUINN
We'll just win Global Hip Hop
without you, then.

He stops when she says "Global Hip Hop."

QUINN (CONT'D)
You definitely won't regret this
for the rest of your life and
slowly go insane because you were
eaten up inside by all of that
unrealized potential!

DRAKE
Wait.

He turns. Quinn's vindicated.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
Can-do spirit? What about skill?

Quinn's face drops. Jas notices.

QUINN
We're very skilled. Jas, show him--

DRAKE
Not her. You.

They stare each other down. He turns to everyone else.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
You know she's playing you, right?
I can spot a fake anywhere.

The crew exchanges murmurs. Quinn panics.

QUINN
Very convincing. Anyway, we've
taken up enough of your time--

She tries to shuffle everyone out.

JAS
(to Drake)
You're lying.

He shrugs. Turns to Quinn. Rapidly--

DRAKE
You dance?

QUINN
Yes.

DRAKE
How long?

QUINN
Since I was ten.

DRAKE
Influences?

QUINN
Travis Wall, Paul Taylor, Ashley
Everet.

DRAKE
Dance. Now.

QUINN
Here?

DRAKE
No better dance floor than the
street.

QUINN
Actually, industry consensus is a
marley roll with a sprung subfloor.

JAS
(angry)
Shut him down, Quinn.

DRAKE
(to the crew)
Look at her. The way she carries
herself. Her posture. That look
like a dancer to you? She has no
muscle. Her calves are like Play-
doh stuck on popsicle sticks. Her
core is a sack of garbage.

QUINN
Why are you looking at my core?

As everyone starts questioning this, Quinn pleads with them,
desperate.

QUINN (CONT'D)
 Why would I start a crew if I
 couldn't dance?

REESE
 Yeah, why would you?

JAS
 Because I know you wouldn't let me
 quit the Birds for a lie.

QUINN
 ...I didn't ask you to do that!

Quinn's crumbling. Everyone reacts, horrified.

JAS
 God, I am so fucking stupid!

LEO
 Are you kidding? Foster already put
 a watermelon in my locker!
 (off their looks)
 Hedgehogs eat watermelon.

QUINN
 (to Drake)
 What's your problem!?

Drake feels a little guilty.

REESE
 Don't blame him. You lie to us...
 for what? This is such a weird
 scam.

QUINN
 I thought I could do it.

MS. ASHLEIGH
 You should've told the truth.

They all leave, disgusted, getting into cars, leaving her
 with Drake in the parking lot. She turns to Drake, livid.

QUINN
 Why would you do that? I still have
 time to learn.

DRAKE
 You don't. You want my expert dance
 opinion? Give up.

QUINN

I don't give up. And I'll get them back.

He's kind of impressed by her confidence, but hides it. He turns to go back inside, which makes Quinn realize something--

QUINN (CONT'D)

You call me out on lying? You're the liar. "Dance is in my rearview." Poetic, but bullshit. You could have worked anywhere. You chose a dance studio.

He looks away-- she's right. She gets another idea.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Dance means nothing to you, right? Well then this shouldn't bother you at all.

Quinn starts MOVING her body, badly. He's weirded out.

DRAKE

Stop.

She SHIMMIES around like a moron. She's really leaning into her terribleness. This supremely irritates him.

QUINN

I'm so fucking good at this!

Drake tries to go back inside, but she wiggles in front of him, blocking his path.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Watch out, here come the animations!

She moves like a ROBOT and is just so awful at it. She STEPS AND DROPS HER SHOULDER, then does a terrible BODY ROLL.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Can you believe this only took me three hours to learn?

Out of his mind frustrated, Drake turns, forcefully GRABS HER HIPS and ADJUSTS HER BODY.

DRAKE

Like this.

She's taken aback. But doesn't stop him.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Slower.

He slowly ROLLS her hips. Forward. Back. Making it flow. They're staring at each other. Suddenly aware how close they are to each other. How intimate.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Loosen up.

He moves her into a STEP and DROP. And again, but it's still pretty bad.

Drake pauses, then reluctantly DEMONSTRATES-- slowly, hesitantly, mirroring her, still holding her hips. He still has the muscle memory, but he's not giving it his all.

She copies. Step. Shoulder drop. Step. Body roll. Shoulder drop. Quinn's movements are more fluid this time. Faces inches away.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Slide?

(off her look)

Watch me.

Drake SLIDES his leg out, and Quinn follows, terribly.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Again. Like you're gliding. Try to feel that feeling.

She's better this time, but still can't seem to master it.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Faster. Five, six, seven, eight...

They STEP, DROP, BODY ROLL, SLIDE. Over and over. STEP, DROP, BODY ROLL, SLIDE. He's close, adjusting her body during each movement. She tries again and NAILS IT. Whoa.

Until Drake SLIDES his leg out... One and two and three... and his knee GIVES OUT. He GROANS and pulls out of the formation. Moment gone. Walks away, shaking out his knee, trying to hide the pain.

QUINN

Let me see.

DRAKE

It's fine--

QUINN

Don't be such a baby.

DRAKE
 (offended)
 "Baby?" This fucking hurts--

QUINN
 --Yeah, yeah, your leg. Mark Inglis
 climbed Mount Everest with no legs,
 so I'm not sure what you're
 complaining about.

He stares at her in disbelief, but he sits down. Quinn puts her hands on him. GRIPS his calf. PULLS, quick, almost like a chiropractor. Drake GROANS louder.

DRAKE
 What the hell?!

QUINN
 Bend.

He does, then realizes the pain is gone. He looks at her like she's crazy. She shrugs.

QUINN (CONT'D)
 I read some medical journals about
 physical therapy post-ACL injury
 yesterday. This adjustment was
 recommended.

Drake stares at her. Amazed. Quinn's suddenly self-conscious.

QUINN (CONT'D)
 Anyway, thanks for the lesson.

She gets up, preparing to leave. He follows.

DRAKE
 Wait.

QUINN
 I'm... intense. But it's fine, I'll
 make friends in college.
 (realizing)
 If I get in.

She lets that sink in. Then resolves something in her mind.

QUINN (CONT'D)
 So then I'll just die alone.
 There's a quiet honor in that, too!

DRAKE
 I was going to say, that was pretty
 cool.

She's surprised.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Look, let me give you some advice.
You suck at dance.

Quinn pauses.

QUINN

...Is that it, or...?

DRAKE

I mean, you're good at other stuff.
Focus on that. The rest'll come
around.

Quinn nods. She gets an idea. Smiles. And she leaves. He picks up the ripped up agenda, thinking, shaking his head.

INT. QUINN'S GARAGE - DAY

Jas, Ms. Ashleigh, Sophie, Leo, Reese, and a handful of others tentatively enter the garage. Quinn stands in front of the make-shift mirror wall, now all covered in BLANKETS and SHEETS. Quinn brightens when she sees them.

JAS

Your ten million texts said you
needed to talk. Make it quick.

Quinn walks toward the wall.

QUINN

Yes, I lied. I wasn't put in dance
as a kid. I was put in microscope
maintenance camp. Do you know why?

SOPHIE

To keep you a virgin 'til you're
30?

QUINN

Because I'm a woman of math and
science. I've charted all the
winning dance moves. I included
lyrical moves that the judges tend
to favor.

They don't say anything, so she levels with them.

QUINN (CONT'D)

You don't want me, fine, I'm used
to it. But you do need me.

(MORE)

QUINN (CONT'D)

Who brought you all together? Me.
Who found Drake, even if it didn't
work? Me. Ask yourselves: Have you
filed the paperwork required to
compete? Did you register the crew?
You all have your reasons for being
here, and I have mine. The 25k
prize is within our reach. I'm the
best way to get it.

This strikes a nerve with everyone.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Let me show you something.

Quinn PULLS THE CURTAIN, revealing the mirrors, but taped to
them--

Enlarged SHEET MUSIC with hundreds of POST-ITS of DANCE STEPS
tacked to each measure. Next to each dance step, a STILL from
a dance movie or GHH's competition, showing that move.

It's an entire choreographed dance.

MS. ASHLEIGH

When did you do all this?

QUINN

I don't really sleep.

They examine it. Leo takes a step forward. He's almost
transfixed. Quinn sits down at her cello. But Jas doesn't
give it a chance.

JAS

Notes on some shitty mirrors don't
make up for this weird trick...

Everyone but Leo starts heading out again-- he keeps staring,
skeptical but interested.

QUINN

Just hear me out.

She begins PLAYING THE NOTES, a slow beat...

QUINN (CONT'D)

Picture it.

Looking at Leo. We hold on him, who closes his eyes, feeling
the music, then opening them, picturing the moves...

JAS

This is dumb--

Reese is watching Leo. Wants to see how this plays out.

REESE

--Hold up a sec.

Leo TAPS his FOOT to the beat. Quinn nods, continuing.

Leo MOVES his body to the left as the choreography list indicates. A little more. Tentatively at first. Then a FULL BODY BEND. RIGHT. CHEST OUT. LEFT. ARM UP. He does this half-out, not a full dance. But following along.

It's good.

The rest of the crew watches. Getting interested, maybe a little inspired...

Quinn's studying him, tingling that it's working. Reese watches Leo, finds the part he's up to... and SPINS along side him. Following along, building the routine.

It's infectious. Another person joins. One by one. Jas hesitates. But ultimately she's a dancer and can't resist a good dance.

The music gets FASTER, the dance moves hit HARDER. It's a beautiful routine. It's messy, everyone's doing their own style, their own spin, but it's magical.

It climaxes, everyone giving it their all. BOOM, they hit the last move, Quinn HOLDS the last note, then puts the bow down. Electric. The crew's giddy.

QUINN

This is our show stopper.

The weight of this washes over them all.

QUINN (CONT'D)

I'm going to get better at this.
I'm studying day and night. We have something here. We can do this if we work together.

(then)

There's eight weeks until regionals. Then State. Who's in?

The crew is silent. Finally Leo steps forward.

LEO

In.

MS. ASHLEIGH

In.

REESE

In.

THE REST

In.

They look at Jas, who stares right at Quinn.

JAS

Don't fuck this up again.

She nods, and they smile at each other. They all CHEER.

DRAKE (O.S.)

In.

They turn. DRAKE IS STANDING THERE. Impressed, amazed Quinn did all this. Quinn smooths her hair, pushes her glasses back up her nose. Drake pulls the now taped-together agenda from his back pocket.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

It says there was a practice tonight.

(then)

Look, I'm not going to waste my time and name if you still end up sucking. But if you can make it to State-- which you definitely wont-- I'll choreograph for you.

The crew looks at each other, surprised, giddy.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

But you can't rehearse here. You need a *marley roll with a sprung subfloor*.

(off Quinn's grin)

You come to the studio after my boss leaves each night, you can rehearse there for free.

Quinn's touched, the crew's stoked. Quinn and Drake nod at each other. An unspoken connection.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

And you're gonna need a better name. "TBD" is lame.

QUINN

That's not the actual--

JAS

--Let it go.

She does.

QUINN
Let's get started.

INT. LMM'S DANCE STUDIO - LATER

Kendrick Lamar's "HUMBLE." is blasting. They're working on the routine, and it's a wreck. Can't seem to gel. It's Bad News Bears. Everyone's doing their own style, no teamwork. Drake, cleaning the space, watches them.

LATER--

One-by-one, each doing the same move (A TURN)--

-Jas turns beautifully, passionately, gives a little sass.

-Leo spins, breaker-style on the ground, his eyes closed.

-Ms. Ashleigh shows Quinn how to do a perfectly on-point turn, adds a cheerleader kick.

-Reese's turn is full of animated isolations.

-Quinn's turn is stilted. She tries over and over. Drake watches her. They lock eyes. Brief. Longing. Quinn looks away, shy. Ms. Ashleigh notices and smiles.

INT. LMM'S DANCE STUDIO - EVENING

The group's split up-- Leo's building songs on his laptop that match the rhythm of Quinn's sheet music, Reese is sketching costumes, the rest are going through the routine.

LATER--

The crew dances, still disjointed. Jas's keeping time.

JAS
Again.

They repeat the steps. A little better.

JAS (CONT'D)
Again.

Once more.

JAS (CONT'D)
Better.

LATER--

Quinn's leading them in a MEDITATION.

QUINN

Meditation is proven to reduce stress. Focus on your breath.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Quinn's in class, TEACHER DRONING ON but Quinn isn't paying attention. She's TAPPING HER FOOT under her desk.

EXT. LMM'S DANCE STUDIO - EVENING

The TBDS wait in the dark parking lot, hiding behind a dumpster. They see the last car pull out. Quinn peeks her head around, and Drake motions them from the back door. They sneak inside. Over this--

REESE (V.O.)

We need money for costumes.
Transpo. Entry fees...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

The TBDS have set up a table with a sign that says, "DANCE FUNDRAISER! TICKETS \$10!" A DUDE buys a ticket, then rounds the corner and is met by the Birds. Foster smiles sweetly.

FOSTER

Hi! Cool ticket. Can I see?

INT. LMM'S DANCE STUDIO - EVENING

Ms. Ashleigh and Jas are trying to loosen Quinn up.

Quinn's legs are shoulder-width apart, and she BOUNCES her body from side-to-side, crossing her arms as she moves, and then DROPS, booty out as she rises. It's terrible.

JAS

Jesus Christ, Quinn, do it like you actually own a vagina.

Quinn blushes, instinctively looks at Drake.

MS. ASHLEIGH

Obviously she has a vagina!

Ms. Ashleigh winks at Quinn-- *"you're welcome!"*

SOPHIE
 (under her breath)
 So gross.

Back to her phone she goes.

LATER--

The crew dances again. It's slowly coming together. Quinn's still the weak link but she's improving. She can hit each step now, but something's still missing.

MUSIC FADES OUT.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - AFTERNOON

The gym's set up for the TBDs' fundraiser. They're in performance mode, dressed up. But the gym's empty.

LEO
 Where is everyone?

JAS
 We sold a bunch of tickets...

QUINN
 But I was counting on more at the door... it wasn't enough.

Suddenly, the Birds strut in.

REESE
 This is a closed event.

GEOFF
 Oh, we belong here.

They take their seats in the bleachers. Foster smiles, then holds up a stack of TICKETS. She DROPS THEM, letting them all flutter to the ground.

FOSTER
 Well, go on. We want to see your super cool dance.

The TBDs are uncomfortable.

JAS
 Come on, Fos. Don't do this.

FOSTER
Do what? Gotta support my fellow
dancers, right?

TRINITY
(whispering)
I thought we were here to mess with
them.

Foster rolls her eyes.

MS. ASHLEIGH
You clearly took those tickets--

FOSTER
Fine. Trinity, give me money.

Annoyed, Trinity reaches into her wallet and pulls out some bills. Foster throws those on the ground toward the TBDs.

FOSTER (CONT'D)
We're paid up. You're dancers. So
dance.

QUINN
She's right. We can do this.

The TBDs exchange looks. Should they? She says, quietly--

QUINN (CONT'D)
It's just practice. It's fine.

The TBDs nod. Take their places. Turn on their music and
START TO DANCE.

It's not great. They're nervous. They're off from one another, and it's obvious that Quinn's just not at everyone else's skill level. She's so in her head she MISSES A TURN. Bumps into Reese. It's embarrassing.

They FINISH, and we see just how far they still have to go. The Birds CLAP.

FOSTER
Thank you. I feel a lot better
about regionals now. Good luck.

The TBDs feel like shit.

INT. HOSPITAL - LAB - EVENING

Maria's expertly preparing to DRAW BLOOD from a WOMAN, 60s, seated across from her.

Quinn, in a candy striper uniform, rushes in. Starts organizing patient charts behind a privacy curtain.

MARIA
You're late.
(off her silence)

MARIA (CONT'D)
You got your English grade back today, right?

Maria examines the Woman's arm.

QUINN
B, but I'm doing extra credit.

Maria's SNAPS her gloves on, almost violently.

QUINN (CONT'D)
What?

MARIA
I didn't say anything.

WOMAN
Is this going to hurt? I hate needles.

Maria TIES the TOURNIQUET around the Woman's arm.

MARIA
You won't feel a thing.
(to Quinn)
It's crunch time.

WOMAN
What?!

MARIA
(re: Quinn)
No, her.

QUINN
I know, regionals is in two weeks.

Maria SWABS the Woman's arm.

MARIA
At the expense of everything else?
Squeeze.

She places a STRESS BALL in the Woman's hand.

QUINN
Everything else? I don't have
anything else.

MARIA
You have me--

QUINN
You can't get me into college.

It's pointed and too harsh. Quinn instantly regrets it.

MARIA
(re: squeezing)
Stop.

She does. Maria INSERTS the needle and starts filling VIALS.

QUINN
You don't get it. I have to focus
on dance right now.

WOMAN
Ooh dance! How fun!

MARIA
It's not fun. It's a distraction.
And somehow, now everything is
riding on it.

WOMAN
Oh. You know, I'm getting a weird
vibe...

In one swift motion, Maria undoes the tourniquet, removes the
needle, and places a cotton ball on the wound.

MARIA
Put pressure right there.

QUINN
It's a calculated risk that's going
to pay off. And then everything's
going to be perfect.

Maria sticks a bandage on the Woman's arm.

WOMAN
That's it?

MARIA
You'll get results in a few days.

The Woman gets up--

WOMAN

Good luck with... college, and also dance? I dunno, it sounds super complicated to me.

MARIA/QUINN

It is!/It's an airtight plan!

The Woman leaves, and Quinn whips the curtain open.

QUINN

I promise you, it'll be fine.

Maria pulls out a STACK OF COLLEGE ADMISSION BROCHURES.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Mom! No!

MARIA

You haven't missed all the deadlines. There's rolling ones, too. I made a list, in order of school ranking, cross-referenced with strong pre-med programs. You say it's not just because of your Dad.

(practically begging)

Then apply somewhere else.

QUINN

Mom, I've worked my whole life for this. I want Stanford. I know it seems crazy. But we've lost so much... I just want a win.

Maria stares at her for a moment.

MARIA

Apply to one. I'm not asking.

Quinn reluctantly takes the stack.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Promise.

QUINN

I promise.

INT. LMM'S DANCE STUDIO - EVENING

The crew's running through the last few eight counts of their routine. They're worried, stressed. Jas looks over to Quinn, who's softly reciting--

QUINN
Forty-five, ninety, twenty...

JAS
Stop, stop.

REESE
Come on, we were killing it!

JAS
Q, what were you calling out?

QUINN
The angles. I'll show you!

Drake's watching her now as she runs to her bag, pulls out a PROTRACTOR and a DRY ERASE MARKER.

MS. ASHLEIGH
You carry that in your bag? Like, at all times?

QUINN
Yeah, what do you have in yours?

REESE
A phone? Normal shit?

Quinn holds her arm out, making a 90-degree angle with her elbow. She TRACES the angle onto the mirror. Then 45-degrees. Holds the protractor up to each angle.

QUINN
See? Ninety, then forty-five degrees.

She demonstrates the two motions, one after each other.

QUINN (CONT'D)
It's seamless!

It isn't.

JAS
Leo, play a beat.

He hits PLAY on his laptop, and Jas FREESTYLES. It's natural, fun, effortless. The rest of the crew joins in. Letting loose. It's infectious. Quinn prepares to jump in--

REESE
Don't think!

Quinn FREEZES. Can't get out of her head.

JAS

Come on!

Finally, Quinn JOINS. She moves tentatively. Clearly thinking of each step before she does it. Drake's eyes are on her.

JAS (CONT'D)

When I was with the Birds, we did freestyles at the end of every practice. Dance how ya feel!

QUINN

This is how I feel!

She reverts back to the choreographed steps of their routine.

REESE

Quinn, we have a week.

Drake steps in.

DRAKE

I gotta lock up.

Quinn nods. They stare at each other again. A little too long, and then he walks to the doors, starting the process. The crew starts dispersing, cleaning up, frustrated. As soon as Drake's out of earshot, Ms. Ashleigh pulls Quinn aside.

MS. ASHLEIGH

What the hell is wrong with you?

QUINN

What?

MS. ASHLEIGH

"What." You know what. Jump that kid's bones already.

QUINN

District code says teachers can't--

MS. ASHLEIGH

--Talk in a sexualized manner in front of students. But you're more than a student. I kind of think of you as a daughter.

Well, that's weird.

QUINN

(uhhhhhh)

You do?

SOPHIE
Thanks a lot, Mom!

MS. ASHLEIGH
Just trust me. Watch this.
(calling out)
Drake!

Drake walks toward them. Quinn shoots Ms. Ashleigh a look.

DRAKE
Hey. I thought of how to solve your
freestyle problem.

QUINN
(playing it cool)
Yeah?

DRAKE
You wanna go out?

Quinn can't believe it. Ms. Ashleigh, vindicated-- "see??"

INT. JUMPIN' JACKS' TRAMPOLINE PARK - EVENING

Quinn and Drake (now wearing a knee brace) enter the indoor trampoline park-- a giant room where the floors and walls are TRAMPOLINES. Quinn watches PEOPLE of all ages JUMP and PLAY.

EMPLOYEES at the counter light up when Drake walks in.

MALE EMPLOYEE
DRAKE!

FEMALE EMPLOYEE
No shit, what're you doing here??

They FIST BUMP Drake.

DRAKE
Just here to jump.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE
Whoa, you're better? Can you dance
with us again?

MALE EMPLOYEE
The crew isn't the same without
you.

DRAKE
Nah...

It's uncomfortable for a moment.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
This is Quinn. She's a dancer.

Quinn's surprised how much she likes being called "dancer."

MALE EMPLOYEE
Very cool. You get the friend rate.

He lifts the tacky velvet rope toward the jump area, Quinn and Drake head for the trampolines.

INT. TRAMPOLINE AREA - MOMENTS LATER

They stand across from each other-- Quinn a little awkward.

DRAKE
I want to try something. Move how you feel.

QUINN
No offense, but a dance lesson is sort of a shitty date.

DRAKE
(laughing)
You mean you're going to turn down a free lesson from the best dancer in the state?

QUINN
No never!
(pretends to look around)
Is he coming later, or...?

DRAKE
And here I was thinking I was gonna go easy on you.

QUINN
No, I prefer you go hard.

She's flirty. Playful. He likes it.

DRAKE
Jump.

Quinn JUMPS up and down, very small, very stiff.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
Stop trying to control everything. You can't be creative that way.
(MORE)

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Don't think, just do it. That's your new motto. Tattoo it on you.

QUINN

Umm, pass. Do you know how many tattoo needles are improperly sterilized? Good luck fighting a MRSA strain with current antibiotics.

DRAKE

Look at those kids over there.

Quinn watches a group of KIDS jump and giggle, moving without self-consciousness or thought. Now Quinn's frustrated.

She BOUNCES again. But she won't give into the feeling.

QUINN

Am I really doing this by myself?

He hesitates.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Come onnnnnnnnn.

Drake's reluctant, but Quinn's infectious. He BOUNCES a few times. Testing his knee. He turns to the entrance.

DRAKE

Hey guys! Get the crew over!

MOMENTS LATER

As "SOLO DANCE" by Martin Jensen starts up...

Drake and his crew surround Quinn and they TAKE OFF...

DANCING, BOUNCING, FLIPPING OFF THE WALLS... they improvise a HUGE DANCE PARTY! KIDS and PARENTS watch/cheer, OTHERS join--

Drake jumps onto a divider between two trampolines and POPS and LOCKS. He FLIPS off onto the trampoline, BOUNCES back up, LANDS back down and BREAK-DANCES.

He's so unbelievably talented, and the rest of his crew SPINS around him...

Quinn watches in wonder, getting inspired...

Drake GRABS her hands and they JUMP, HIGHER and HIGHER until Quinn raises her hands in the air and LETS LOOSE.

Drake's never seen this side of her. Free.

She hops onto the divider and joins Drake, performing parts of her dance, some freestyle... until he GRABS her, knocks her over playfully. They FALL onto the trampoline together, BOUNCING UP after they land, over and over, Quinn now on top of him as the bouncing stops.

They're LAUGHING, out of breath, overcome--

QUINN

How's your knee? I read this article last night in the New England Journal of--

Drake KISSES her. Passionately, without thinking. When they pull away--

QUINN (CONT'D)

--Medicine that states--

DRAKE

--Stop.

She does. He KISSES her again. She smiles, then frowns.

QUINN

Look. I saw all the "Step Ups," and if you think I'm going to fall for you like you're Channing Tatum or something...

He's grinning at her.

QUINN (CONT'D)

I'm serious! Just because you have a very attractive face and a very nice body doesn't mean I have to be with you. We're not inevitable. That's my choice.

She thinks for a minute.

QUINN (CONT'D)

I've weighed the pros and cons, and I decided yes.

She KISSES Drake again.

INT. QUINN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Quinn sneaks into her dark room in the dead of night, giddy, exhausted, hyper.

First time we've seen her relaxed, carefree, a total adorable mess. She flops into bed, fully dressed, and promptly falls asleep.

INT. LMM'S DANCE STUDIO - EVENING

Jas is keeping time as they dance the end of their routine.

JAS

And push... bump, turn...

Quinn's dancing with a little more spring in her step. Being sexy, even. Staring right at Drake. Inspired by her improvement, they're all clicking together--

JAS (CONT'D)

..and drop, drop, BOOM DONE.

They finish, clap, cheer. It's the rush of really nailing it for the first time. The bits of the music we hear-- killer. It seems like they actually have a shot?

JAS (CONT'D)

Rest up tonight. Hydrate.

QUINN

See you tomorrow when we kick ass.

INT. QUINN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Quinn's already awake, laying in bed and staring at her ceiling. Then she looks over to her bulletin board. A post-it in an empty spot says "reserved for Stanford acceptance letter!!" Quinn smiles.

INT. MS. ASHLEIGH'S KITCHEN - SAME

Ms. Ashleigh's running around, shoving shit into her bag, shoveling food in her mouth. Sophie watches her.

SOPHIE

Do I get breakfast, or is--
(sarcastically, dramatic)
Dance your family now.

MS. ASHLEIGH

(rolling her eyes)
I've been busy, but when you get a hobby, you'll understand.

SOPHIE
I have a hobby.

MS. ASHLEIGH
Posing online as the organizer of
Coachella is not--

SOPHIE
--Whatever.

MS. ASHLEIGH
You coming?

Sophie SIGHS, and they leave together.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - SAME

Drake takes a breath, steps inside. PULL BACK to reveal that
it's an orthopedic rehab office.

EXT. STREETS - SAME

Foster, earbuds in, runs with determination. Fire. Like she's
chasing the world.

INT. LEO'S BEDROOM - SAME

DJ equipment everywhere. Leo's dancing. Reminds himself to
open his eyes.

INT. REESE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Reese is putting the finishing touches on the costumes.

INT. BUS (MOVING) - DAY

Jas's holding the pole, earbuds in, music on. She moves her
body in small motions, practicing.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Today's the day! There's a buzz in the air. Crowds are
filling the seats as the TBDS enter from the back, surveying
the scene. Nervous, excited. They approach the sign-in table.

SIGN-IN GUY
Name?

JAS

The TBDs.

QUINN

It's temporary.
 (to the crew)
 Let's do this.

They look at each other. Ready to go.

INT. AUDITORIUM STAGE - DAY

-MALE DANCERS VOGUE on stage as the crowd whoops it up.

-A group of JAPANESE B-BOYS do their thing on stage.

-KRUMPERS tearing up the stage.

-And the big competition-- the dance crew RE FRESH MINT.
 They're super talented. Crowd goes wild.

INT. BACKSTAGE/ON STAGE - SAME

The TBDs are now huddled together backstage. They're wearing the coolest streetwear-- unisex, baggy, interesting neutral palette you don't usually see in competition. Their faces full of worry as they watch RE FRESH MINT. They're are good. Better than the TBDs.

Sophie studies a few of the girls dancing. She looks sour. Is she... jealous? The TBDs are starting to spin out, but gives a pep talk.

QUINN

Top two teams go to state. It's fine. Just do like we practiced.

Reese can't stop staring at their costumes. RE FRESH MINT RIPS OFF their harem pants, revealing booty shorts.

REESE

There's something familiar about their harem pants.

JAS

That's cuz harem pants are so overplayed.

REESE

I know. It's too much.

A moment between them.

JAS

Our costumes are dope. You did great.

Quinn closes her eyes, and everyone joins her.

QUINN

Just relax. We can do this. We worked hard. I promise.

They start calming down-- they trust her. RE FRESH MENT finishes their routine, leaves the stage, and--

ANNOUNCER

Next up... The Birds of Prey!

The crowd ERUPTS as the Birds push past the TBDs backstage. As Foster passes--

FOSTER

Well, if it isn't the TBDs. Truly Busted Dancers.

LEO

Oh man, is that what it stands for?

QUINN

No! How many times do I...

FOSTER

Jas, did you realize you made the worst mistake of your life yet?

Jas doesn't say anything.

TRINITY

(to Leo)

Shouldn't you be sleeping?

(explaining)

Hedgehogs are nocturnal.

GEOFF

Why do you know that?

TRINITY

I got a hobby. I host a podcast about animals now. I call it "Animals with Trinity."

The Birds take their places on stage-- Foster giving a little wave to the TBDs as she does. Their music STARTS, and they rocket into a fiery DANCE NUMBER. It's amazing-- CHEER STUNTS, a CHORUS LINE of hip hop moves.

Quinn's terrified.

Foster FLIPS and lands in the SPLITS, then POPS her booty as the crowd SCREAMS. It's a mash-up of popular hip hop hits. They complete their PYRAMID-- Foster shooting a look in Quinn's direction as she expertly DISMOUNTS.

The Birds FINISH to thunderous APPLAUSE. They strut off stage and approach Quinn, smiling smugly.

FOSTER

That's how it's done. Take note.
Like, go get your phone, open the
Notes app, and take note. Then, go
fuck yourself.

TRINITY

Have fun holding the losers'
trophy.

GEOFF

That's not a thing.

FOSTER

Well, soon we're going to have two
things to celebrate.
(explaining)
Geoff got into Stanford, early
decision.

Quinn's face drops.

TRINITY

Wait, you're smart?

FOSTER

He's a National Merit Scholar.

TRINITY

I thought you were just a dick. You
can't be two things!

GEOFF

Holy shit, is that... Drake
Ramirez?

Everyone joins his gaze toward the audience, and we see Drake taking his seat in the audience. Quinn perks up.

ANNOUNCER

And finally, please welcome to the
stage... the TBDs!

The crew takes the stage, takes their places. "ROCKSTAR" by Post Malone and 21 Savage starts up...

They start slow with BODY ROLLS, moving in step with the sultry music, TUTTING flawlessly, until the music SWITCHES to an up tempo bop, and their moves mesmerize the crowd.

It's awesome. High energy. Fast-paced. Switching from song to song, they NEVER STOP. Quinn KEEPS UP, though she's still stiff, focused on hitting all the technical steps. They hide her in the back.

ON DRAKE--

He watches, keeping time/tapping his foot, quietly moving "with" them. Ms. Ashleigh is backstage watching, proud.

STEP. POP. LOCK. JUMP.

They finish powerfully, and the audience CHEERS IN SUPPORT. They rush off stage, flushed with excitement.

BACKSTAGE--

The crew is buzzing, congratulating each other, jumping up and down, high-fiving. Quinn's hard on herself.

JAS
You killed it, Quinn.

QUINN
I was stiff.

MS. ASHLEIGH
You weren't.

Drake joins them backstage. Wraps his arms around Quinn.

DRAKE
That was amazing!

QUINN
You really think I was okay?

DRAKE
You were great.

Everyone tenses as they see the Announcer collect the results from the judges' table and take the stage.

ON STAGE--

The Birds, TBDs, and everyone backstage fall silent.

ANNOUNCER

And now the moment you've all been waiting for. So let's get to it! In second place...

The TBDs squeeze hands in anticipation. The Birds do the same. Quinn takes a breath.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

...RE FRESH MENT!

RE FRESH MENT pushes past the TBDs and rushes the stage. The audience CHEERS.

JAS

Fuck.

The TBDs are utterly deflated. We all know what's coming...

ANNOUNCER

And in first place, your Regional Champions...

QUINN

(whispering, willing)
TBD, TBD, TBD...

ANNOUNCER

...Birds of Prey!

Quinn's face drops. The TBDs drop hands, gutted. The Birds SQUEAL and CHARGE the stage. Foster grabs the trophy, hoisting it above her head. She doesn't even look at Quinn.

A tear rolls down Quinn's cheek, and she turns to flee.

DRAKE

Quinn, wait.

But she's already out of there.

INT. QUINN'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Quinn's in bed, hiding under her covers, deep in mourning. There's a KNOCK on her door.

QUINN

(pathetically)
Go away.

The door opens. Maria stands there.

MARIA

Quinny? I'm sorry you're hurting.
But look, now you can focus on
other schools...

(whispering, off-screen)

I told you, it's not a good time.

(to Quinn)

Quinn, your friend is here.

Quinn pops her head out of the covers.

QUINN

I know.

She pulls the covers off further, revealing that she's
clutching three MICROSCOPES and a pile of BOOKS.

QUINN (CONT'D)

All my friends are here.

Reese steps in. They're kind of weirded out. Maria exits. A
beat.

REESE

You weren't like... fucking your
microscopes, were you?

QUINN

Eww, no!

REESE

Well, I don't know. Some people are
into weird shit.

QUINN

What're you doing here?

REESE

I think RE FRESH MENT cheated.
There's just something super
familiar about their costumes.

QUINN

What am I supposed to do about it?

REESE

Do your shit.

Reese grabs Quinn's laptop, practically dangles it in front
of her.

REESE (CONT'D)
 You know you want to research...
 (seductive)
 Do an... algorithm.

Quinn raises an eyebrow. Gives in. She's weak. Grabs the laptop.

LATER--

Quinn and Reese are still at it. Quinn's typing, hacker-style, frustrated.

REESE (CONT'D)
 Did you try reddit?

QUINN
 What am I, a five-year-old just learning to code?! Of course I tried reddit!

REESE
 Something about the harem pants.
 The color-blocking--

QUINN
 Got it!!!!

She turns the computer around. On the screen--

A video from Filipino TV. Obscure. Hardly any views. One comment about "...cute harem color blocking i dieeeee."

It's a group of DANCERS performing... THE EXACT SAME DANCE RE FRESH MENT PERFORMED. Same attitude, same moves, right down to the costumes.

They smile at each other.

REESE
 What do we do?

QUINN
 We make a presentation to the GHH committee. And lucky for you, I'm hella good at presentations.

INT. DRAKE'S ROOM - DAY

Quinn and the rest of the TBDs rush into Drake's room, screaming with excitement.

QUINN
WE'RE GOING TO STATE!!!!

Then they realize Drake's on the ground, shirt off, grunting in frustration as he does some rehab stretches on his leg. He gets up quickly, embarrassed.

DRAKE
What?

QUINN
Wait, are you... rehabbing? I'm so proud of you! Why didn't you tell me?

DRAKE
You're going to State?

QUINN
We are.

Everyone's dancing around, celebrating.

JAS
Reese figured it out!

Jas looks at Reese, impressed.

REESE
It was nothing. Quinn really--

QUINN
It was all Reese! They realized RE FRESH MENT cheated! We were third place. They're out, we're in!

JAS
(to Drake)
So whatcha say?

All eyes on him.

DRAKE
I'm in. But first we need to celebrate.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Groups of teens are milling about, some dancing, some drinking, while Leo spins on a makeshift DJ stand. Our crew trudges through.

MS. ASHLEIGH
Underage drinking? If Principal
Nguyen asks, I was never here.

LATER--

Drake and Quinn are grinding on each other to the music,
having a great time.

ON JAS AND REESE--

They're on the SEE-SAW together. When Jas is in the air, she
slides a BOTTLE down to Reese, who takes a sip, pushes up,
then slides the bottle down when they're up top.

REESE
Do you really think we have a shot?

JAS
I think Quinn's smart. We just have
to be better than Foster, and
Foster's slipping. She says it's a
numbers game.

Reese doesn't look so sure.

REESE
This isn't a game for me. You know
why I like dance? Anyone can do it.
Doesn't matter what you are. This
isn't like girls' softball and
boys' baseball. There's no best
girl or best boy dancer. It's just
best dancer. Best crew. You always
have to choose, but not with this.
It's for everyone. And I just want
to be part of something that's for
everyone.

Jas puts her hand on Reese's.

LATER--

Leo's spinning, while Sophie watches, actually interested.

LATER--

Quinn and Ashleigh are on the swings. Quinn watches Drake
across the way, then checks her phone.

QUINN
I should go. My mom's waiting.
(rolling her eyes)
(MORE)

QUINN (CONT'D)

You'd think I was murdering someone. God forbid I don't study one night of my entire life.

MS. ASHLEIGH

She just wants what's best for you.

QUINN

You don't know that. Maybe she's doing this to ruin my entire life.

MS. ASHLEIGH

I'm taking a guess she isn't a piece of shit.

(then)

Look, being a mom is hard. And if I had to do it all over again... I definitely would not. But then, eventually, I'd miss that little cyberbullying freak and my heart would do that thing where it's like it's exploding and disappearing all at once, because she's my whole world. So cut your mom some slack. You're going to college. Your world's getting bigger, and hers is getting smaller.

Quinn understands.

QUINN

Sophie treats you like shit. You shouldn't let her.

(of Ms. Ashleigh's smile)

Not that the onus is on the victim to demand a certain level of basic human treatment, of course...

She looks over to some commotion, and sees the TBDs in the midst of an impromptu dance party. Excited--

QUINN (CONT'D)

Let's go.

They join in, and the group dances together, having a blast.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - AFTERNOON

The entire crew sits on the cement court, Drake standing over them, fired up. A spark we haven't seen before. Quinn holds a stack of papers. She steals a look at Drake, who grins back.

DRAKE

There's only a month 'til State, so we're already behind. We're going on a technicality. We need to do better. We're throwing out the old playbook!

Drake grabs the papers in Quinn's hands and THROWS it across the court. Quinn's jaw drops. She quickly gathers them.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Rip it up.

Quinn clutches her agendas protectively. Everyone joins in--

EVERYONE

Rip it up! Rip it up!

Fine. She RIPS the agendas in half as everyone CHEERS.

DRAKE

Line up.

They get up. Reese stands across from Jas, Quinn across from Drake, everyone else across from someone else. Sophie sits on a swing nearby texting.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Copy each other's movements. You're mirrors.

Everyone does, and they slowly sync up with each other. Quinn and Drake are staring at each other. Moving their bodies in step with one another. Comfortable.

MS. ASHLEIGH

Let me show you how it's done.

Ashleigh really lets loose, dancing sexy.

MS. ASHLEIGH (CONT'D)

See, the trick is to control the pelvis.

SOPHIE

Eww! No one wants to hear about your pelvis!

MS. ASHLEIGH

(snapping)
Sophie, would you cut this shit already?

Everyone's quiet. Sophie looks up, shocked.

SOPHIE

I was just--

MS. ASHLEIGH

You were just nothing. I'm enjoying myself, is that so terrible? I love you, but... Unless you want to get up here and dance, keep the opinions to yourself, okay?

It's quiet, awkward. Finally Sophie says--

SOPHIE

Okay.

Ms. Ashleigh looks at her.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

I'll dance.

JAS

Yeah right.

SOPHIE

Well not to this shit.

She scrolls through her phone, turns on some HARD-CORE UNDERGROUND RAP. Ms. Ashleigh's confused.

Sophie stands, then POSES. She takes a STEP. Then another. She RAISES her hand. Moves it incrementally. Then her other hand. She's ANIMATING her body and she's AMAZING. Like a beautiful robot come to life. The crew just stares at her. Ms. Ashleigh in complete wonder.

Sophie's face lights up, moving her eyebrows and mouth in time with the song, telling an entire story with every part of her body.

As it gets a little faster, she begins WAACKING-- WHIRRING HER ARMS around like helicopter blades. Then she busts out into a full-bodied HIP-HOP ROUTINE. Passionate, intense. A show stopper.

Ms. Ashleigh's jaw drops. Everyone's shocked. When Sophie's done, she just shrugs, sits back down and texts.

MS. ASHLEIGH

Sophie, how'd you learn to do that?

Sophie looks up, stares powerfully into her mom's eyes.

SOPHIE
 You, Mom. I learned from watching
 you.

MS. ASHLEIGH
 (touched)
 Really?

SOPHIE
 Fuck no! How could I learn that
 watching a forty-year-old
 cheerleader?! I learned from
 Youtube.

MS. ASHLEIGH
 Well, I'm so excited! Think of it!
 CHEERLEADING SEASON IS COMING UP.

QUINN
 Sophie, will you join our crew?!

Everyone looks at Sophie eagerly. Their eyes plead with her.

SOPHIE
 Ugggghhhh. Fine.

Everyone cheers, embraces her. She squirms away.

As they're celebrating, we PULL BACK. By the tennis courts we
 see Foster, Trinity, and Geoff hiding, spying on the TBDs.

GEOFF
 Shit.

FOSTER
 Drake Ramirez is helping them.

GEOFF
 Who cares? He hasn't danced for
 years. He can't make them good.

FOSTER
 He can try! It's an insult to those
 of us that are truly talented.

GEOFF
 What do you want to do, babe?

Foster turns around, thinking.

FOSTER
 I want to destroy them.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Quinn walks the halls with Jas and the rest of the TBDs. Up ahead, Foster, Trinity, and Geoff move toward her. Quinn braces herself as they pass--

FOSTER
Hey there, rock star.

QUINN
Foster, leave us alone.

Foster's momentarily thrown by Quinn's new-found confidence.

TRINITY
Congrats on getting to State. Now
we get to beat you twice.

JAS
You really got nothing better to do
than this? Can't you just like, go
back to Googling pics of French
Bulldogs in top hats?

TRINITY
(gasping, whispering)
I told you that in confidence!

Suddenly, a TEXT ALERT goes out on the school messaging system.

The STUDENTS in the halls check their phones. We hear them play a video and CRACK UP. They look at Quinn and laugh harder. This is the funniest shit they've ever seen.

A sinking feeling spreads over Quinn. Jas looks at her phone.

QUINN
What is it?

Jas tries to downplay it, but Quinn quickly grabs it from her. Watches.

It's a video titled "DANCING TUTORIAL WITH QUINN ACKERMAN." Words flash across the screen-- "TURN," "POP AND LOCK," etc., and we see CELL PHONE FOOTAGE of Quinn's audition terribly demonstrating those moves.

Then, we see Foster expertly performing the same moves.

Everyone's laughing at Quinn. She sees, right in front of her, how truly terrible she is compared to Foster. It's devastating.

FOSTER

You squeaked by at regionals. But State's the best of the best. You're gonna make a fool of yourself.

Quinn runs off.

INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Quinn flies in, wanting to be alone. Jas is hot on her heels.

JAS

Quinn--

Quinn heads back for the door. But Jas grabs her, stops her, turns her around.

JAS (CONT'D)

They're garbage. I told you.

QUINN

She's right. How did I think I could beat her? I'm such an idiot!

JAS

She's in your head. Ignore her.

QUINN

It's easy for you to say! Nothing bothers you. You're just this cool, carefree girl with mermaid hair who's like, "look at me, I can drive a car like it's sooo easy, even though it's not, and it's fine if we don't win State, because I'm so chill!"

JAS

Nothing bothers me? For a genius, you sure are an idiot. Everything pisses me off. This shitty world. The fact that I have to be the literal best at something to even have half a shot of doing anything with my life.

QUINN

Well, being the best at stuff is lonely. At least you have friends.
(off her look)
Come on, you're doing this to fuck with Foster, not to help me.

JAS
At first, yeah. But... ugh, don't
make me say it.

QUINN
(smiling now)
I think you're going to have to!

JAS
Fine.
(sputtering it out)
I like you. Even if you're a freak.

Quinn DANCES around, happily.

JAS (CONT'D)
See, now I'm regretting this...

QUINN
Too late, you said it! Serious
question, should we get friendship
tattoos? I've been reading about
the sterilization rates on needles
and I think you'll be pleasantly
surprised--

JAS
Later. We gotta hunt some Birds.
Follow me.

INT. DANCE PRACTICE ROOM - LATER

Jas and the TBDs march into the practice room, followed by a nervous Quinn, clutching her backpack. The Birds are running through part of their routine and stop abruptly--

JAS
You think you're better than us?
Prove it.

The Birds LAUGH.

REESE
You mess with one of us, you mess
with all of us.

LEO
We're a team.

They all nod. Quinn's touched.

TRINITY
 (nodding)
 Teamwork makes the dream work.

GEOFF
 Shut up, Trinity.

Foster SIGHS. Sure, why not. Foster collects her hair in a high pony above her head. The rest of the crew gets ready.

FOSTER
 I assume West Coast rules apply?

QUINN
 What are West Coast rules?

MS. ASHLEIGH
 "Fuck the rules."

Mr. K interjects--

MR. K
 Is this really the best--

MS. ASHLEIGH
 This doesn't concern you, Joel!

MR. K
 (nodding)
 Sounds good.

He steps away.

JAS
 Hold up, we're not on neutral territory.

FOSTER
 So?

REESE
 So this is your turf.

TRINITY
 Well, what's yours? A tunic store?

JAS
 I got an idea.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - LATER

Everyone's stretching, getting their game faces on. Drake struts in. Foster's eyes narrow.

TRINITY

He's not in your crew. He can't be here.

DRAKE

I'll be wherever I want.

FOSTER

Whatever. I'd love to bring Drake Ramirez to his knees.

Drake narrows his eyes. Foster turns MUSIC up on her phone, and EVERYONE BEGINS DANCING. The Birds are obviously better.

Quinn dances right in Foster's face, WAVING her arms around, trying to psych her out.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Is that supposed to be dancing?

Drake turns to Quinn, and they dance together for a moment, close, forgetting everyone else.

Foster does some BODY ROLLS, and Jas steps up to them, doing her own, deeper, more raunchy ones. Then Geoff does some ATHLETIC BREAK-DANCING, and one by one, each dancer SHOWCASES HIS/HER MOVES.

But Sophie gets bored and flops down on a swing. Ms. Ashleigh sits on the adjacent swing her and KICKS HER FEET IN THE AIR. Leo joins. They SCRAPE THEIR FEET in the mulch, "dancing" in the seats.

Mr. K watches Ashleigh. He's into it. She knows it-- dances a little sexier on purpose.

Jas CLIMBS UP THE SLIDE and DABS halfway up. Quinn jumps on the MONKEY BAR STEPS and SPINS AROUND!

Suddenly, they've all abandoned the battle. They're laughing, having a good time, dancing together. Foster watches this, slowing down...

FOSTER (CONT'D)

I thought this was a dance-off?

But they don't hear her. Her face falls. Watching this team dancing well-- a cohesive, happy unit-- panics her.

TRINITY

Foster is talking to you losers!

Trinity starts a CHOREOGRAPHED ROUTINE and the rest of the Birds join her. Foster finally joins in, and they kick ass. The TBDS stop and watch, intimidated.

But Quinn's curious. She observes them, noticing something. The Birds finish, and Foster smiles victoriously. The TBDS look at each other. They decide not to care.

JAS

Congrats.

The TBDS walk off, pumped, laughing and chattering away. Foster is left there, worried, punched in the gut.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Quinn walks out with her crew.

LEO

That. Was. Awesome.

QUINN

Did you see? They were scared. They wouldn't have bothered messing with us if they didn't think we were a threat.

(smiling)

I think we can beat them.

The rest of the crew gets excited, agreeing.

DRAKE

We should ride this wave. Get in another practice.

They nod, when Quinn realizes--

QUINN

I left my backpack. I'll catch up.

Quinn heads back to the playground.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - MOMENTS LATER

Quinn turns the corner and sees a distressed Foster on a swing, alone, speaking urgently on the phone.

FOSTER

...Mom, they're really good...

Quinn tucks back behind the building, hiding from view. She notices Foster's different-- dropped the snobby affect, she's quiet, honest. Speaks in almost a clipped cadence.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

...No, we'll definitely still win... but... No, I know... Well, then I'll apply for financial aid... It's not charity, Mom... Well, what's WIC, then? That's no--

Foster looks up and spots Quinn. Quinn freezes. Foster's eyes narrow. Instantly back to normal, hardened, and polished.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

I'll call you back.

She hangs up the phone, spots Quinn's backpack by the slide. She grabs it and practically barrels toward Quinn.

QUINN

Sorry, I didn't--

FOSTER

I don't know what you think you heard--

Quinn tries to grab the backpack, but Foster pulls it back.

QUINN

I get it. I'm in the same position--

Anger flashes in Foster's eyes, and she gets in her face.

FOSTER

You don't know my life. You tell anyone, especially Geoff, I'll ruin you. Got it?

Quinn nods, fearful. Foster takes a breath, collects herself. Mouths her mantra. Calm. Too calm.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

I'm going to find my friends. It's great, isn't it? Having friends? Having a boy? Yours had your back today. But what's going to happen to them when you fuck this all up?

Quinn's stunned. Foster's cold as ice, dripping with disdain. She practically spits out the words--

FOSTER (CONT'D)

You know how I know you're gonna? You're not a dancer. You're trying to use dance, trying to swoop in and take everything from me. I don't know why, I don't care. But this is my whole world. It's all I think about. Doing my makeup, tap, tap, tap of the brush, "this is a good rhythm, can I use this?"... Eating dinner, running through my routine in my head... Fucking my boyfriend, "when will this be over so I can get back to dance."

Foster moves toward Quinn.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

The money would be nice, but that's not why I do what I do. I do what I do because it's my life. So why don't you go back to your books or fantasy board games or whatever the fuck it is you're going to be doing for the rest of yours, alone. Okay, hon? Because dance isn't here to give you shit.

Foster hands her the backpack, turns and walks away, leaving Quinn, dumbfounded and immobilized.

INT. QUINN'S KITCHEN - LATER

Quinn enters, upset. Maria's at the table, the COLLEGE APPLICATIONS spread out before her.

MARIA

Do you have anything to say?

Quinn doesn't.

MARIA (CONT'D)

You didn't fill out a single one.

QUINN

You do it online.

MARIA

Did you?

(off her silence)

You missed every deadline!

QUINN
I didn't have time.

MARIA
So now if you don't win State,
what, you have no backup--

But before she can finish, Quinn disappears upstairs,
slamming the door.

INT. LMM'S DANCE STUDIO - EVENING

Drake is in front of them keeping time as they work on his
new routine. It's clear he's great at this.

DRAKE
...two and three... then we're
turning, and down turn, up...
Quinn, more energy, pop, hit it,
Quinn pick it up...

Quinn's lagging, but tries to get her head back in the game.
But she almost immediately BUMPS into Sophie.

QUINN
Sorry.

Drake cuts the music.

DRAKE
Let's pick it back up in the
morning.

JAS
We're running out of time.

Quinn's growing frustrated. Blurts out--

QUINN
I can't do this!

The crew exchanges looks.

JAS
Quinn, you can. You've gotten so
good. And you've done so much for
us.

Quinn doesn't say anything.

JAS (CONT'D)

Leo would have never danced or opened his eyes. I would've never stood up to Foster.

REESE

No one's ever believed in me.

LEO

You calm us down. You make us a team.

JAS

We need you cuz you did all this. You're our glue.

DRAKE

Let's go somewhere. Trust me.

INT. SCIENCE MUSEUM - NIGHT

Quinn and Drake explore an exhibit on kinesiology. A vivisected human body is in front of them. Drake stares at the ACL.

DRAKE

What's really going on?

QUINN

Foster said we're going to lose because I'm doing it for the wrong reasons. I'm scared she's right.

DRAKE

What are your reasons?

Quinn hesitates. But something catches Drake's eye. They hold hands as he leads her to another room.

INT. PHOTO CAPTURE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

It's a phosphorescent light room where you can "capture" your shadow on the wall and "write" in the air with an LED pen that produces colorful lines of light.

Some KIDS screwing around leave, and they're alone. Drake spins around, and Quinn watches his shadow spin on the wall, then FREEZE when the strobe light goes off. After a few seconds, the image DISAPPEARS.

Quinn SPINS around. She grabs a pen and draws SQUIGGLES in the air. Then she stretches her arm out, FREEZES the image, and draws the angle her arm makes in the air.

DRAKE

Want to try the turn from today?

Quinn nods. They stand, side by side, facing the wall.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Starting from arms up... Five, six, seven, eight...

They perform a few eight counts of the routine. It's awesome with the flashes of LIGHT and the SHADOWS FREEZING. High energy, and Quinn keeps up. She's firing on all cylinders. When she gets to the turn, she NAILS IT.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Yes!

Quinn jumps up and down in excitement, holding his hands. She pulls him close and KISSES him. When they pull away, she immediately tries the move again and again. But she's clearly over-thinking. She loses the flow. It's stilted now. She GRUNTS in frustration.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Stop thinking. Just relax.

QUINN

Thinking is how I relax.

DRAKE

Yeah, you seem super chill.

QUINN

Tell me what I'm supposed to feel, then. I'll do it.

DRAKE

Come on. You know that's not how it works. If you want to be a dancer--

QUINN

Well I don't. And neither do you. Not anymore.

She can't believe she actually said that. Quinn hesitates, then blurts out--

QUINN (CONT'D)

How could you just give up like that? You're amazing.

DRAKE

Injuries end careers all the time.

QUINN

But you didn't even try! You were scared. You're so busy feeling scared that you're not doing anything.

DRAKE

Yeah and you're doing something, right? Slumming it with us, why? Why are you doing this? You didn't even care about dance.

QUINN

I do. It's fun!

DRAKE

You don't have fun. You take on challenges, but with purpose...

His mind is racing, trying to put the pieces together--

DRAKE (CONT'D)

But this close to...
(realizing)
This is for college.

He's glad to have figured it out, not mad.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Why hide that?

QUINN

My dad was supposed to go to Stanford. But he... he died the summer before. I was a baby, so I never met him. But I heard all the stories. How much he wanted to go.
(then)
But it made me strong.

DRAKE

Don't do that. You're allowed to get mad. Get upset.

QUINN

And what'll that get me?

Drake tries a harsher tactic.

DRAKE

You won't get in.

QUINN
Stop.

DRAKE
Make me.

QUINN
Make you?

DRAKE
It won't pay off. You're going to
be all alone.

She sort of lunges toward him, but restrains herself.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
Do it.

Quinn doesn't answer. Somehow she knows what he means.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
Do it.

His eyes are encouraging her. So she lightly presses his
shoulders.

QUINN
Happy?

He doesn't answer. Frustrated, she PUSHES him, a bit harder.

DRAKE
It feels good, right?

She goes for a huge SHOVE, but he MOVES OUT OF THE WAY-- a
SLIDE. Seamless.

She reaches for him again. He SLIDES away again.

QUINN
This is stupid.

But she gets it. Drake goes for her. Is he... going to hit
her? It's intense and weird but Quinn instinctively, angrily,
almost fearfully PUTS HER ARMS UP, blocking his.

He GRABS her arms, stretches it out RHYTHMICALLY. At the
angle she was trying to hit earlier. A DANCE MOVE. He grabs
her hips. Moves them. They SLIDE. ARMS OUT. TURN. They're
dancing and fighting and she's out of breath.

Drake and Quinn continue together, staring at each other. Not
doing a routine. Following each other.

Their faces pull closer, and they start kissing. She PUSHES HIM against the wall. The camera PULLS AWAY and we're left with their silhouettes, freezing and disappearing in the air.

EXT. LMM'S DANCE STUDIO - EVENING

The TBDS wait behind the dumpster for Drake's signal. But it doesn't come. Quinn's giddy, impatient. Finally Quinn pokes her head around. The back door opens. It's Foster, Geoff, and Trinity. Confused, the TBDS approach.

QUINN

Where's Drake? What're you doing here?

FOSTER

We booked the studio.

(to Jas)

For someone who wants to run her own, it seems like you should know that you actually have to pay to use it. Otherwise people get fired for that sort of thing.

Drake exits the studio, pissed, pushing past the Birds.

QUINN

Drake, it'll be okay.

DRAKE

How, exactly? I was going to ask my boss about choreographing...

QUINN

(brightening)

That's great! Look, it's a setback, but when we win, you'll be a hot commodity. We can start building your resume with GHH...

SOPHIE

Chill out, Mom.

JAS

Come on, guys. Quinn's right.

(looks at Foster)

We beat the Birds. No distractions.

Foster stares right back. Drake takes a breath.

DRAKE

Yeah, okay. Let's go.

INT. QUINN'S GARAGE - DAY

The TBDs are practicing, with Drake at the front of the room. They're clicking. Totally on point. Quinn keeps up. But Maria enters, interrupting, smiling.

MARIA
 (to Quinn)
 I need to talk to you.

INT. QUINN'S GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The crew listens through the garage door as they hear the slightly muffled conversation between Quinn and Maria.

QUINN (O.S.)
 ...Mom, you can't barge in...

EXT. QUINN'S DRIVEWAY - SAME

Quinn, unhappy, listens.

MARIA
 Quinny... I got you a new
 interview!

QUINN
 What?

MARIA
 I didn't know if it would work out!
 But you know Dr. Agarwal in
 radiology? She knows the dean...
 you have a new interview with the
 Dean of Admissions, Ms. Rosenberg's
 boss. You can start over!

QUINN
 Wow...

MARIA
 Wow is right! We'll prepare you
 better this time. Dr. Agarwal
 thinks with some work--

QUINN
 When is it?

MARIA
 --She'll put in a good word, so
 you're as good as in--

QUINN
(suspicious)
When is it.

MARIA
Next Saturday.

QUINN
Mom!

MARIA
This was a huge favor. They're
fitting you in last minute--

QUINN
--Mom, that's State!

MARIA
I know, but Quinn, you did this to
get into Stanford.

QUINN
You picked this date on purpose.

INT. QUINN'S GARAGE - SAME

The crew hears this, worried.

MARIA (O.S.)
Why would you do something riskier
to get maybe the same result? Do
you honestly think you can win?

Quinn thinks this over, reeling. She's clearly torn.

QUINN (O.S.)
I don't know! But everyone's
counting on me.

MARIA (O.S.)
So?

EXT. QUINN'S DRIVEWAY - SAME

MARIA
This is your future we're talking
about. Everything you've worked for.
Are you going to throw it away for
people who won't even be on your
radar when you start your real life?

Quinn storms out.

INT. QUINN'S GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Quinn enters, trying to calm down.

QUINN
Hey guys, I need to--

She realizes everyone is silent, packing up their stuff.

REESE
You think we're gonna lose?

QUINN
I didn't say that.

DRAKE
But you're thinking about the
interview.

Her silence is telling. She's getting defensive, upset.
Sputters out--

QUINN
I'd be crazy not to consider!

LEO
What about us?

QUINN
You can reconceive the dance, if
you had to. Drake could step in.
The rules stipulate this close to
the competition, an alternate--

DRAKE
You're serious.

QUINN
It's just off the top of my head.
Come on, I'm the weak link anyway.

JAS
Yeah. And we stuck by you anyway.
But you were just using us.

It's like a gut punch. They all look at her, disgusted, then
storm out. Drake lingers.

QUINN
Wait!

DRAKE

Foster tried to recruit me. I turned her down without considering. I lost my job. Jas didn't hesitate sticking up for you. We all gave up a lot for this, because you were so sure. And now you're okay dropping us, just like that?

Quinn reaches out to him, but he pushes her off.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Don't.

He leaves.

INT. QUINN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Quinn's back in her bed, disheveled, moping. She's clutching her microscopes. She looks to her bulletin board, which is now covered with Polaroids of her friends, dance stuff-- including the space where her Stanford acceptance was supposed go. Quinn buries herself further under the covers.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

Like earlier, we see the Birds' feet STOMPING rhythmically as they practice. Quinn's feet MOVING down the halls of high school, all alone. It's sadder this time. Lonelier.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Maria's eating breakfast. Quinn enters, grabs a yogurt from the fridge, and leaves.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Ms. Ashleigh's grocery shopping alone. Hears MUSIC through the PA system, doesn't move.

INT. JAS'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jas's in her room, flipping through pics of her and the TBDS on her phone. Then pics of her and the Birds.

INT. REESE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Reese tries to sketch some designs, but the pages are blank.

INT. MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT

Leo's working on his music. Not dancing.

INT. A/V BOOTH - AFTERNOON

The Birds perform at the pep rally. Quinn's running the spotlight while glancing at her interview practice note cards. Suddenly, the audience CHEERS even louder.

She's shocked to see Jas is DANCING WITH THEM. She's rejoined the Birds. Only now as punishment, Jas doesn't get the solo.

INT. FAST FOOD KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Drake's at his new job-- working the cash register at the drive-thru. Into the mic--

DRAKE

Welcome to Eddie's Gyro Shack.
Would you like to try our new Gyro
Hero Taco for only \$1.29?

QUINN (O.S.)

Drake, is that you? Can we talk?

DRAKE

What can I get you, ma'am?

QUINN (O.S.)

Drake, it's me. Quinn. Ackerman.

Drake's BOSS, a dick, now stands behind him.

DRAKE

That'll be \$9.50, please pull up.

Through the window Drake sees Quinn-- NOT IN A CAR. On foot.

QUINN

I know I am supposed to be in a
car. But I don't know how to drive,
because I've spent my whole--

The Boss doesn't care and walks away.

DRAKE

Quinn, what are you doing here?

QUINN

I got you your job back. I told them it was my fault.

DRAKE

I didn't ask you to do that.

QUINN

I wanted to. Drake, we're good together. One, we inspire each other--

DRAKE

Stop, Quinn.

Quinn's falling apart.

QUINN

It's just, I think... I think I love you or something.

(realizing)

I feel... My heart races, my eyes dilate...

She hears how terrible this sounds, and stops herself.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Let me start over. You don't understand how hard it is for me--

DRAKE

--Your life is easy. You want to learn to dance, boom, you learn to dance! You're charmed.

QUINN

I'm not. I work hard.

DRAKE

Everyone works hard, Quinn. But you wouldn't know. You're so busy in your own head doing your own shit. You barely let me in.

He looks her right in the eyes.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

It's a good thing you never feel anything. Because this feels like shit.

He turns away, leaving her heartbroken.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Quinn's walking the halls alone. Passes a flock of Birds and Jas. But then Quinn spins around.

QUINN
(to Jas)
You shouldn't be in the Birds.

TRINITY
What did you just say?

QUINN
I know I fucked up, but you're
better than this, Jas. You could
still win.

This gives Jas pause.

FOSTER
Let's go, Jas.

They walk away, but Jas is thinking. Knows what she has to do.

INT. QUINN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

It's still dark. Quinn's in bed, staring at the ceiling, wide awake. Desperately--

QUINN
Today is the day all of your dreams
come true.

Quinn nods to herself. She has to make it happen. Gets up and starts getting dressed.

INT. THEATER - DAY

Crowds of people. A huge audio set-up. Nervous energy. A sign that says "2019 Global Hip Hop State Championship." TECHIES are preparing the stage.

The TBDs enter the back of the theater. All of them-- Jas and Drake included. But they're scared.

INT. QUINN'S KITCHEN - DAY

Quinn, dressed in her business best, clutching her note cards, passes through the kitchen.

MARIA

I can drive you.

Quinn doesn't answer and keeps walking.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

The TBDS stretch backstage and eye the Birds. Foster cranes her neck, looking for Quinn. Wonders where she is.

INT. STANFORD ADMISSIONS OFFICE - SAME

Quinn sits across from MR. GREYFIELD, the scary Dean of Admissions. Quinn's confident, prepared.

QUINN

...I'm a National Merit Scholar and president of student council. And I feel that Stanford would give me the arena to explore my passions.

MR. GREYFIELD

(nodding)

And what are those passions?

QUINN

Jewelry making. The way the gemstones fill my soul, the way the spring clasps light my heart on fire... it's magical.

Mr. Greyfield nods again. She's nailing this.

MR. GREYFIELD

Fascinating. Though, my colleague mentioned you were doing some sort of dance project...?

Quinn brushes this aside.

QUINN

Oh yes. That... turned out to be nothing.

She wants to say more.

MR. GREYFIELD

Okay, well great. It sounded from what she said, sort of a lark.

(chuckling)

How challenging could it even be?

She doesn't think. Blurts out--

QUINN

Very challenging.

MR. GREYFIELD

Excuse me?

QUINN

I didn't think so at first but... I was terrible at it.

MR. GREYFIELD

Oh.

QUINN

I tried. I failed. That's never happened to me before.

She kind of LAUGHS to herself. He's supremely weirded out.

MR. GREYFIELD

Well, it was wonderful meeting you--

QUINN

You know, after a while I didn't even care? Me. Quinn Ackerman! It was okay failing, because I was feeling it. You know what I mean?

He doesn't. But Quinn's getting into it. Mr. Greyfield starts shuffling papers, trying to get her to leave.

QUINN (CONT'D)

All that stuff deep down that you buried, that you pretended didn't matter, that you hid from even yourself. It has to come out. You just let it out. You don't think.

She sort of heaves her body, demonstrating.

QUINN (CONT'D)

That's dance. But I let them down. I was so busy being stuck inside my own head I couldn't see what was all around me. And now, I feel...

She pauses. A revelation.

QUINN (CONT'D)
...I feel horrible.

She lights up.

QUINN (CONT'D)
Do you see?! I feel horrible!

Quinn jumps out of her seat.

QUINN (CONT'D)
I know what my passion is now! And I
have to get it back! I have to go!

She runs out of the room.

INT. OUTER ADMISSIONS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The staff are so jazzed to see Quinn again! She rushes past--

QUINN
No time! I HAVE TO GO!!!

They cheer her on. The Admissions Woman though quietly tucks her unused post-its back into her drawer, disappointed.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Quinn's sprinting out of the building, requesting an Uber. She runs to the corner. Waits wildly impatiently. Paces.

INT. THEATER - SAME

On stage, the Birds begin their routine. It's sexy, feverish. Stunning. Better than anything we've seen from them.

INT. UBER - LATER

Quinn jumps into the Uber. The UBER DRIVER turns to her--

QUINN
--DRIVE!

INT. THEATER - SAME

The TBDS watch the Birds from backstage. Worry spreads.

INT. UBER (MOVING) - LATER

Quinn's barking orders as they move through the streets--

QUINN
You missed it! Jesus, Krystal!

UBER DRIVER
Hey, I'm not dying today! You want
to get us there, then YOU DRIVE.

QUINN
FINE I WILL!

She CLIMBS into the front seat, on top of Krystal--

KRYSTAL
What the hell!!!? I wasn't serious.

Krystal's smushed over to the passenger seat, totally freaked out. It's a messy/insane transition but Quinn keeps DRIVING.

KRYSTAL (CONT'D)
What the fuck are you doing?!

QUINN
I'm driving!! Truthfully, I've been
so scared to learn. There's so much
out of your control! But you can't
live inside your head, you know?
You have to feel the road!

Quinn HITS THE CURB accidentally. Horrified, Krystal frantically CLICKS her seat belt.

INT. THEATER - SAME

The Birds build to the FINALE as the TBDs watch backstage, completely overwhelmed. The Birds give this dance everything-- FLIPS, ROBOTTING, POPPING/LOCKING, CHEER STUNTS.

It's like everything but the kitchen sink of dance. They launch into a wild WAACKING piece that devastates the TBDs, especially Sophie-- that's her thing.

INT. UBER (MOVING) - SAME

Quinn's a crazy person.

QUINN
I'm doing great!

She DRIVES OVER A TRAFFIC CONE, then SLAMS on the brakes, NEARLY HITTING A PEDESTRIAN CROSSING THE STREET. After a beat--

QUINN (CONT'D)

Did you know most accidents occur due to sleep deprivation rather than simple negligent driving--

KRYSTAL

Get. The. Fuck. Out.

QUINN

Fair enough!

She flings open the door. RUNS OUT OF THE CAR.

EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Quinn BOOKS IT down the sidewalk. She's in good shape now, so she moves quickly and isn't hyperventilating.

URNS A CORNER-- And now she sees the cause of the traffic.

A GIANT PARADE is in front of her. Crowds of PEOPLE line the streets, watching, as floats pass by.

QUINN

Seriously?! What's this even for?

But Quinn needs to get to the other side. Sees a group of DANCERS performing their routine in the parade--

Quinn takes a breath, then BURSTS into the parade route. DANCING HER WAY THROUGH IT seamlessly--

Then pops out the other side! She keeps running. Now runs smack dab into a CONSTRUCTION SITE.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Okay, are you fucking kidding me?!

But she LEAPS over a DITCH-- BALANCES across a BEAM-- DROPS DOWN under a frame of a building-- A handful of CONSTRUCTION WORKERS watch this in disbelief--

CONSTRUCTION WORKER

She could have just like, gone around...

But nothing's stopping Quinn! She keeps moving, turns another corner. Sweat pooling down her fancy business suit. She checks her watch. She's running out of time. Looks around, panicked. Then she looks up ahead.

Sees the HOSPITAL. Pulls out her phone, dials.

QUINN
 (into the phone)
 Mom? Can you pick me up?

INT. CAR (MOVING) - MOMENTS LATER

Maria drives fast, not happy, but speeding for her kid. They sit in silence for a moment, until--

MARIA
 So you want to be a dancer now?

QUINN
 No. But I want a life. Can't you understand that?

MARIA
 No, I'm an idiot--

QUINN
 (sarcastic)
 --Yeah, I think you're an idiot--

MARIA
 --Maybe I just want to protect you--

QUINN
 No.

She suddenly waves her hand, regrouping.

QUINN (CONT'D)
 We're not doing bratty teenage daughter/overbearing mom today.

MARIA
 (smirking)
 Then don't be such a brat.

Quinn smiles back. Then--

QUINN
 Your world's not getting smaller.

Maria's surprised. But she's relieved, just hearing that.

MARIA
 He always wanted you to make your own path one day. I should let you.
 (then)

(MORE)

MARIA (CONT'D)

You know, I was wrong about one thing.

QUINN

(pretending to be shocked)
One whole thing!

MARIA

There aren't tons of Quinns,
anywhere. You're one in a million.

They share a moment. Then--

QUINN

I hope you meant one in 7.6
billion, because one in a million
is actually kind of insulting...

EXT. THEATER PARKING LOT - LATER

Maria's car SCREECHES to a stop. Quinn THROWS open the door,
they share a look, and Quinn races toward the theater.

INT. AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Quinn runs through the stage doors.

STAGEHAND

You can't go back there!

QUINN

Sometimes in life you have to take
risks! Live boldly--

STAGEHAND

Yeah I don't give a shit.

He lets her in.

INT. BACKSTAGE/ONSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Quinn, breathless, BURSTS backstage, practically throws
herself at the TBDS. She's frantic, crazy--

DRAKE

What are you doing here?

QUINN

--Please let me back in! I know I
can rock this!

Silence. Quinn furiously searches her pockets.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Wait, I jotted some notes on what to say-- NO. FORGET THE NOTES. I'm speaking from my heart.

She pauses, wondering if that was enough. It wasn't.

QUINN (CONT'D)

I get what that means now. Why I can't control everything with my head. You guys taught me that.

The Birds are leaving the stage, she's running out of time. She throws everything she can at this, building in fervor...

QUINN (CONT'D)

We're friends! I never had those before, and I don't want to lose you. We inspire each other. I ran out of my interview because you're not stepping stones to a better life. You're my rocks. We built this shit together. Let's end this shit together! What do you say?!

She stops talking, gasping for air, expectantly, watching them look at each other, considering. And then--

JAS

No.

Quinn's face drops.

QUINN

What?

They all agree.

REESE

You're not even in costume.

LEO

You're wearing a business suit.

SOPHIE

Also you are so, so sweaty.

DRAKE

Did you think you could just show up here and magically know the dance we planned without you?

MS. ASHLEIGH

Yeah, how would that even work?

REESE

Maybe if she made this speech when we were practicing?

DRAKE

You should go back, Quinn.

Quinn's devastated. The Birds get backstage. Foster practically lights up when she sees Quinn.

ANNOUNCER

For our last performance, please welcome to the stage, the TBDs...

The crew runs out. Quinn doesn't move as the stage lights go LOW and the TBDs take their places. Foster leans over and whispers to Quinn--

FOSTER

Surprise, surprise. You're alone.

The TBDs BEGIN.

"TWO BIRDS, ONE STONE" by Drake (rapper Drake, not ours) starts. They're sending a message.

The Birds are offended. Pissed.

Quinn watches-- a mixture of amazed and saddened and lonely.

The TBDs MOVE... but the whole thing is missing something. Yes, the choreography is electric, the music is killer. But they're off without Quinn. They're just not feeling it.

Jas looks over to Quinn as she dances, equally hurt and conflicted. Quinn's worried.

The TBDs MIME the motion of BOUNCING on a TRAMPOLINE. Then ROBOTTING like they're under the STROBE in the PHOTO ROOM.

Quinn smiles. A SPARK goes off in her. Inspired. Her wheels are turning. Her eyes flash. She takes a breath and CLOSES HER EYES. SHE FEELS THE MUSIC.

Drake looks over to her. He knows instantly what's going on.

She opens her eyes. She doesn't think.

QUINN RUNS OUT ON STAGE.

She throws herself into the middle of the stage. SHE STARTS TO FREESTYLE.

The TBDs are horrified. Drake watches in amazement.

Quinn's fucking amazing.

She SLIDES. She TURNS. She BODY ROLLS. She just FEELS IT. It's passionate. Intense. Confident in its freedom. Not the most technically perfect, but so emotional. Vulnerable. Tears stream down her face. She kicks the air, she smiles, now joyful. An entire emotional experience, in dance.

She steals the freaking show.

Totally pumped from this, the TBDs continue. The TBDs MOVE with feeling, with fire, with passion. Drake's choreography is electric-- fast and powerful, hardcore like nothing anyone's ever seen.

TURN. POP. LOCK. BEND. SPIN. CLAP. STOMP. It's art.

Sophie ANIMATES, and the crowd loses it.

Are they better than the Birds? Hard to say, but it doesn't matter. The TBDs love it. The crowd loves it. Drake loves it. Totally inspired, he JUMPS IN and FREESTYLES, too.

The crowd goes nuts. Drake Ramirez is back.

When he's done, the entire crew DANCES TOGETHER. They finish up their original routine, but improvise throughout, enjoying themselves, moving how the music takes them.

They finish-- BOOM.

The crowd EXPLODES. The TBDs take their curtain call, accepting the applause, beaming, celebrating every moment.

Quinn sees Maria in the audience-- totally amazed by what she saw. She's been there the whole time.

DRAKE

That was unbelievable!

QUINN

So you forgive me?

JAS

Fuck yeah, we forgive you!

VERONICA ROSENBERG (O.S.)

That was very impressive.

Veronica Rosenberg is backstage. Quinn's shocked.

QUINN

What are you doing here?

VERONICA ROSENBERG

You invited me, remember? I wasn't sure you were even coming, given you had another interview.

All of the TBDs listen, nervous for Quinn. Veronica smiles.

VERONICA ROSENBERG (CONT'D)

I knew you had it in you. I'll talk to Greyfield. But I don't think I'm out of line in saying-- welcome to Stanford.

Quinn freaks out--

DRAKE

(cocky)

Thanks, but she doesn't need your--

QUINN

Shut your beautiful face, no I do, I DO!! Thank you so much!!

The crew celebrates as the Announcer speaks on stage...

ANNOUNCER

...third place, INTENSION!

JAS

You killed it, girl. We're cool, okay?

ANNOUNCER

Second place... The TBDs!

The TBDs look up, in shock. Oh. They didn't win, actually.

QUINN

I sort of thought...

JAS

Yeah it kind of seemed...

LEO

So that means...

ANNOUNCER

In first place, your grand champion... The Birds of Prey!

The Birds rush the stage, celebrating! Foster clutches the novelty check. Quinn and Foster lock eyes.

DRAKE

I'm cool with it. Second place is pretty fucking good.

The crew agrees. The Birds exit the stage. Foster approaches.

JAS

Did you come here to gloat?

Foster hesitates. Then reluctantly sputters out--

FOSTER

You weren't total fuck-ups.

A moment between Foster and Jas. An understanding.

QUINN

You deserve it. You've been at this for years. Actually, can we talk...

They step out of earshot. Quinn reaches into her bag and pulls out a few stapled sheets of paper.

QUINN (CONT'D)

I've done a lot of dance research. I found this dance scholarship you'd be perfect for.

Foster gives her a quizzical look.

QUINN (CONT'D)

You made me better. Yeah, you're a monster. I think you have some things to work out. Emotionally, I mean.

Foster's growing impatient.

QUINN (CONT'D)

I guess you could say, I didn't think. I just did it.

Quinn smiles knowingly. Foster stares at her.

FOSTER

Am I supposed to know what the fuck that means?

Quinn LAUGHS and returns to the stage, Foster to her crew. We see Foster look at the papers in her hands.

Smiles a genuine, excited smile. She's touched, maybe even changed a little. Geoff calls after Quinn--

GEOFF

Enjoy your moment, Quinn. Because
I'm going to make your life
miserable in college!

But for now, who cares? The TBDs celebrate, Drake and Quinn kiss, they hoist their trophy up, a PIC SNAPS... And FREEZES into a photo, and we pull back...

INT. QUINN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Quinn's tacking that photo to her bulletin board, next to her Stanford acceptance letter. The whole crew watches. Finally--

SOPHIE

We literally came to your house to
watch you hang a photo we're in?

MS. ASHLEIGH

Sophie, honey, it's symbolic.

SOPHIE

It's lame, is what it is.

MS. ASHLEIGH

Stop it, right now.

SOPHIE

Sorry, Mom.

Ms. Ashleigh and Quinn share a smile.

LEO

(re: acceptance letter)
So what is this, again?

DRAKE

I think it's cool.

REESE

It's a little braggy, no?

QUINN

(trying to be chill)
It's fine. I don't need to hang
this piece of paper on the wall
like some kind of loser! Ha ha ha!

She places it on her dresser. But she can't stop eying it.

JAS

Well now that you're a college big shot, maybe you can help me sign up for some business classes.

(rolling her eyes)

I figure if I'm gonna open my own studio... whatever, it's dumb.

QUINN

(brightening)

It's not dumb!

REESE

It's awesome.

Jas smiles, grabs Reese's hand-- they're together.

DRAKE

We gotta go... but you want to hang up your letter though, don't you?

QUINN

YES.

She quickly replaces it. As they walk out...

QUINN (CONT'D)

It nearly killed me taking that down. And I always thought I would die from *karoshi*, the Japanese term for death from overwork...

As upbeat MUSIC picks up...

INT. JUMPIN' JACKS' TRAMPOLINE PARK - LATER

The TBDS JUMP at the park, as they celebrate, flip, dance, and party. There's a sign that says "CONGRATS TBDS!" Quinn stops for a minute, smiling, taking it all in.

QUINN

We are "to be determined." We're works in progress.

(then)

And I guess it turns out, that in the dance of life, you should always let your heart... lead.

There's a long, awkward pause.

JAS

That was so fucking stupid.

They all LAUGH. Then--

LEO

"To be determined?" That doesn't make sense.

QUINN

It does--

SOPHIE

I thought it was "The Bad Dancers," cuz of how you sucked so much.

REESE

But we didn't know we'd suck.

QUINN

(lovably agitated)

And why would we name ourselves "The Bad Dancers?!"

MS. ASHLEIGH

Maybe it's like "bad" as in "good." Is that what you meant?

QUINN

No! It was a temporary solution!

LEO

Now, "Temporary Solution" is a way better name.

Everyone nods.

DRAKE

You're all wrong. It's "the best dancers."

JAS

But that's lamer than Quinn's idea of "bad."

QUINN

How do you still not get this?!

Drake's smiling at Quinn, messing with her... As they all debate, the group overtakes her as they bounce together. The MUSIC SWELLS and we...

FADE OUT.