

2
ET VIVIMUS
Section A

VOICE

Content Warning: Eating disorders, drug and alcohol use, body-imaging, hand-to-hand violence

(Theme music plays.)

Trick City Productions presents Iris. Episode 2, Et Vivimus.

Written by Emma Grasso Levine. Directed by Alex Teman.

Original music by Alex Arlotta. Sound design by Jacob Montgomery.

Executive producers Sophia Ray, Alex Teman, Angela Dogani, and Grace Goble.

(Theme music fades out.)

Police sirens blare loudly from close by.

KYLE

That was...

ISABELLA

(grimly)

Penny.

CHARLOTTE

Leave it to Penny to kill the mood.

MCKENZIE

She should have stuck with the keto diet. I heard it also helps clear your mind.

KYLE

Charlotte, what happened with you guys?

CHARLOTTE

She couldn't handle the pressure. I was just trying to help her get help, but she acted like I was ruining her life or something. Like I would do anything that wasn't in her best --

You know what, I don't want to talk about her anymore.

Let's just get back to what we came here to do.

The sirens fade out.

ISABELLA

I'm going to go back to my room.

MCKENZIE

Of course you are.

ISABELLA

I don't know about you, but I'm not planning on joining Penny in a cop car tonight.

CHARLOTTE

And your plan to avoid that is... running past a bunch of cops? While wasted?

A police scanner is heard.

CHARLOTTE

Get inside.
Now!

The door to the theatre opens with a creak and slams behind them.

MCKENZIE

(calling)

Izzy, where are you going --

KYLE

Watch out for the --

Izzy yelps as she trips. A thud.

KYLE

... uneven floorboards.

Izzy scrambles to her feet.

CHARLOTTE

The curtain is still down from the last performance they had here. We can hide behind it.

ISABELLA

(disingenuously)

Great.

MCKENZIE

Can we please stop walking so fast, my feet --

KYLE

Hurt from your private lessons?
We know.

MCKENZIE

I guess foot cramps are the price you pay for greatness.

KYLE

Wait, are we going down the stairs?

CHARLOTTE

The crossovers are the best option. You all barely have the coordination to make it across a studio floor, let alone this wasteland.

ISABELLA

Crossovers?

KYLE

The passages underneath the theatre. They're like a maze. Down here.

ISABELLA

I can't see anything.

CHARLOTTE

Maybe because we're underground.
Stay behind me.
You wouldn't want to get lost.

ISABELLA

How far do these go?

KYLE

Nobody really knows.

A trap door creaks open.

CHARLOTTE

(calling down from the ladder)

There's a trapdoor up to the stage.
Watch the rungs.
But hurry up. It's almost 3:30.

MCKENZIE

Um, I was not informed we'd be climbing.

KYLE

What part of the plan for tonight screamed "heeled boots?"

CHARLOTTE

Heels or converse, we are not going to be late. This is happening at 3:33AM.

ISABELLA

Um. Why?

KYLE

The book says the veil is thinnest between three and four in the morning. The witching hour.

CHARLOTTE

Exactly. And do you remember what we saw, last time we were here?

This theatre has power. We all felt it.

The book says doing this ritual, communing with the spirits that haunts this theatre, will give one of us the power we need to achieve true greatness. Not when we're 35 and retiring into oblivion.

But right now.

With the principal role in the winter production.

ISABELLA

Wait... so you're actually going to do a ritual?

Did you watch *The Craft* or something, recently-

CHARLOTTE

Do you want this chance, or not? We need four people for this, and you seem like you could use it. I mean, falling in your first class... More than anyone, you need a chance at redemption.

So, we choose you. I thought you'd be honored, honestly.

But... we can easily replace you.

If that's what you want?

ISABELLA

No, no, I --

CHARLOTTE

Good.

The book says that if we do this right, one of us will be chosen. We'll be able to withstand anything. Give the greatest performance of our lives.

KYLE

Okay, now that she mentioned it, it really does feel like something out of *The Craft* / --

CHARLOTTE

You know, Kyle, you're replaceable too.

The trap door slams shut.

ISABELLA

Huh. So this is the infamous ghost light...

KYLE

Um, where's that pentagram thing on the ground? It was just here last time, but-

CHARLOTTE

Kyle, pass me that nail. Next to your foot.

An awful scratching sound as she etches the pentagram into the floor of the stage. She explains the ritual as she finishes the etching.

CHARLOTTE

We each stand on one of the points of the pentagram.
We need the four elements to make a portal between us and the spirit world. To lift the veil.
So McKenzie, you're wind, Izzy is earth, Kyle is water, and I'm fire. Naturally.

KYLE

Um. I kind of... forgot?

CHARLOTTE

You're kidding.
We talked about this. And you literally always have a water bottle on you, like I don't-

MCKENZIE

It's fine. I got it.
Pass the battery acid.

The sound of liquid dripping onto the wooden floor.
Suddenly, the bottle drops, and shatters.

KYLE

McKenzie! What the --

MCKENZIE

Oops, sorry.
Well, it's got to be at least one percent water.

CHARLOTTE

Kyle, just stand on your point.
Izzy, here.

ISABELLA

The book?

CHARLOTTE

The pages are made of paper, paper comes from trees. Voilà, Earth.
Here.

The sound of Charlotte striking a match.

CHARLOTTE

Fire.
McKenzie, you're next... Is that weed?

MCKENZIE

Can I just borrow your match for a second? Thank you.

CHARLOTTE

Unbelievable.

MCKENZIE

What was I supposed to do, wave my hands around to make a breeze? That's dumb.
I figured this is more... potent.
Plus, I used my card and stocked up when I was home.

CHARLOTTE

Would it kill you all to focus?
McKenzie, stop waving that around.

ISABELLA

Um, guys? The book, look at it --

The sound of the book's pages flipping, slowly at first, and then faster.

ISABELLA

I -- I'm not doing that.

KYLE

It's the energy. The power. You see it now, too.
You know, the spirit has been waiting as long as we have for this --

CHARLOTTE

Yes. And it is 3:32, so let's not keep it waiting any longer.

The pages of the book stop moving.

ISABELLA

Okay, okay. But what about the fifth point?

CHARLOTTE

We leave it open.

ISABELLA

For?

KYLE

... The spirit. Who will hopefully accept our offerings.

MCKENZIE

I hope it appreciates how much this weed cost.

Kyle and Izzy snicker.

MCKENZIE

(suddenly intense)

Would you guys shut up? I don't know about you, but I want this to work.
Isabella, we should switch. I should have the book, I know what I'm doing-

CHARLOTTE

McKenzie, chill.

MCKENZIE

Charlotte, I should be leading this exercise-

CHARLOTTE

Izzy, the book landed in the right place.
It's 3:33. Read, from the top.

ISABELLA

(struggling, in Latin)

Transire in limine...

CHARLOTTE

(whispering, in Latin)

Transire in limine, spiritum. Et vivimus.
Transire in limine, spiritum. Et vivimus.
Now, all together. Call the spirit across the threshold.

ALL

(voices warped, echoing)

Et vivimus. Et vivimus. Et vivimus.

CHARLOTTE

It lives.
Drop your objects.

The pages of the book begin to flip again.

ISABELLA

What the... Did you feel that? What was that?

KYLE

I-I don't know --
Charlotte, watch the match!

ISABELLA

No, no, no, no, don't drop it.

A fire ignites.

MCKENZIE

Oh god, the floor is on fire --
Someone stamp it out! Please!

The sound of something breaking.

CHARLOTTE

No, don't move off your point.

KYLE

Izzy! Holy shit --

ISABELLA
(voice warped)

The spirit is awake. She is in the walls. She is behind you. She smells your desperation. She has chosen who will rise... and who will fall.

Izzy coughs violently. A bulb shatters.

KYLE

Oh my god, the ghost light just --
Did anyone get hit?
I can't see --

ISABELLA

I think my hand is bleeding --

MCKENZIE

I'm totally fine.

KYLE
(sarcastic)

Good for you, McKenzie --

Izzy begins to cough from the smoke.

ISABELLA

Okay, I am NOT dying in a building collapse on my first night --
McKenzie, give me your jacket.

MCKENZIE

What, why?
Oh my God, no, it's designer --

The sound of Izzy smothering the flames with
McKenzie's jacket.

ISABELLA

There.
Now let's get the hell out of here.

A sound.

CHARLOTTE
That might be --

KYLE
The cops.

ISABELLA
Forget the crossovers, just go for the door!

MCKENZIE
Ugh, first my jacket, and now my shoes, this isn't-

ISABELLA
Just run, run, RUN!

Music begins to play. The sound of the four girls stumbling outside and running away, breathing heavily.

KYLE
(slightly out of breath)
How is the sun already coming up?
Are the cops still here?

ISABELLA
I don't know, but we should keep going.

Their footsteps crunch on leaves as they walk.

MCKENZIE
Do you think... it worked?

KYLE
I mean, I feel a little different.
But it might be the contact high?

MCKENZIE
No, I'm telling you, it's good quality weed.

CHARLOTTE
Izzy, did you get burned?

ISABELLA
No.

KYLE
Yeah, it was like your body just kind of took over. It was... intense.
So was the stuff you said in there, about the spirit, like-

ISABELLA

What? I didn't say anything, I was coughing so hard, I couldn't-

MCKENZIE

Maybe we're all just cross-faded.

CHARLOTTE

Or.
It chose one of us.

An alarm goes off.

MCKENZIE

And that is my pre-auditions workout alarm.

McKenzie silences it.

KYLE

If we're not going to sleep, we need food first.

MCKENZIE

Um, no. I have to go to the studio now.

CHARLOTTE

Fine. We'll go with you.

MCKENZIE

No!
I mean, I --

CHARLOTTE

We could all use the extra hour of practice before auditions.

ISABELLA

Auditions. On zero sleep. Great.
Also, I think I might have a shard of that ex-

CHARLOTTE

We're barely going to have any practice time if we don't go now.

MCKENZIE

Ugh, fine.

(to Isabella)

Just... don't drip blood in the studio. We wouldn't want you to slip. Again.

SECTION B

The sound of conversation fills the room.

ISABELLA

This is not how I thought this morning would go.

MCKENZIE

As Viktor always says, sleep when you're dead.

ISABELLA

I didn't think I'd be more nervous day two than day one.

MCKENZIE

Hopefully whatever we did last night helps. You'll need it.

KYLE

Ignore her. McKenzie's just grumpy because she missed her morning tofu scramble --

MCKENZIE

I'm vegan, so actually, I wouldn't ever-

CHARLOTTE

We know.

MCKENZIE

We have enough totally random obstacles thrown at us, at least we can control this.

CHARLOTTE

I'm good. Thanks.

MCKENZIE

Fine. When you're getting rejected from the top companies, just remember. I tried. But you know, there are plenty of things you can do that don't care what size you are. Like, you'd be a great mom.

CHARLOTTE

You know, Izzy, you could use some private lessons with Viktor.

MCKENZIE

What?

ISABELLA

Um. What?

MCKENZIE

I earned the lessons, actually, so she can't really.

CHARLOTTE

Actually, McKenzie only gets private lessons because she pays extra for them.

MCKENZIE

(scrambling)

Um, I have literally no idea what you're talking about. It's not-

CHARLOTTE

Come on, McKenzie.

Izzy, Headmaster Frye usually gives private lessons to the freshman who don't know their foot from their damn hand. But... you pretty much fit that description.

(quietly, to McKenzie)

And McKenzie, I'd find some lessons in thinking before you speak.

Piano music plays. The conversation swells, before dying down as Viktor enters the room.

VIKTOR

Ladies. Welcome to the most difficult time of your ballet careers thus far. For the next two weeks, you will treat every class as an audition for the winter production. Use these weeks as a test. Many of you will learn this week that you should begin looking for jobs in arts administration. So, I hope you all have adequately prepared.

He waits for a moment. No one moves.

VIKTOR

Very well. To the barre, then.

Everyone moves to the barre.

New girl. You deigned to join us. I wasn't sure if you'd come back. But I see you have some guts. Five, six, seven, eight. Plié...

The accompanist begins to play again, before cutting out.

VIKTOR

New girl. Did I say you could dance in this class?

I didn't think so. Please, sit and watch. Clearly, you still have a lot to learn about how this school works. I, your teacher, will determine when you are ready to redeem yourself.

Kyle and McKenzie begin whispering to each other.

And Kyle, McKenzie. Care to include the rest of the class in your conversation?

MCKENZIE

No, sir.

VIKTOR

Oh, good. Because while I'm sure we'd love to hear about McKenzie's plethora of problems, I think we actually have better things to do.

KYLE

Yes, sir.

VIKTOR

Well, I'm glad we agree. For a second there, Kyle, I thought we were in my nightmare where YOU are in charge. A person who can't style a bun to save her life and holds her dance partners as if they were repugnant frogs instead of boys.

KYLE

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to-

VIKTOR

No need to waste more of our time.

Now, would you like to know my selection for the winter ballet? Because it just so happens that I have made my decision.

Well, in that case.

To honor the 30th anniversary of Iris Academy's inaugural performance of this ballet, I would like to announce that our winter production will be...

GISELLE.

An excited murmur passes through the students.

ISABELLA

That's... from the ghost story.

MCKENZIE

It's a universally relatable story. She perishes of a broken heart. Tragic. We've all been there. I mean, some of us more than others, of course.

ISABELLA

Whatever, McKenzie.

VIKTOR

I hate to interrupt this scintillating discussion, but your careers are disintegrating by the second, and I thought you'd want to know.

CHARLOTTE

Our apologies, sir.

VIKTOR

Don't tell me you're sorry. Show me. Music, please.

The accompanist's piano music begins again.

And, plié...

The piano music becomes hazy as time passes. A bell rings.

VIKTOR

That's lunch break. Remember, I don't want to see any signs of it afterwards. Water is not for guzzling. You get cramps, you're out. That's all. You have half an hour. Oh, new girl? Wait a moment.

ISABELLA

Sir, I know I don't deserve to dance yet, but please-

VIKTOR

Stop. Stop. I didn't hold you back to talk about that. Listen up, I'm only saying this once. I know what it will be like for you out in the real world. Every decision I make comes from that knowledge. First-hand knowledge. Seeing it with my own two eyes. But I see you. And your potential. Remember that, because I don't waste much time on compliments. There is too much work to do. Got it?

ISABELLA

Yes, sir. Thank you.

VIKTOR

Good. You may dance after lunch. Be back in twenty-five minutes. And send McKenzie back in here.

Izzy shuts the door to the classroom.

ISABELLA

McKenzie, Viktor wants to see you.

MCKENZIE

I know.

(sarcastically)

Izzy, I'd love to go with you to see what happens with your little talk with the Headmaster.

VIKTOR

(calling)

McKenzie.

CHARLOTTE

Good luck with that. Izzy, I happen to know that Headmaster Frye is on break right now. Maybe I'll see you later

ISABELLA

Uh, yeah, okay. Bye, Kyle.

KYLE

Cool, cool.
I'll just... eat lunch by myself.
It's fine, we're fine.

Music transitions into a knocking sound on the office door.

LAWRENCE

Charlotte, I have a lot to attend to before I finish up for the week-

ISABELLA

It's Isabella, actually.

LAWRENCE

Oh. I'm sorry.
I'm very busy, is there something I can help you with?

ISABELLA

I can always come back later, but Charlotte told me --

LAWRENCE

Charlotte told you?

ISABELLA

Yes. It's about... private lessons.

LAWRENCE

I see. Why don't we find a time to meet next week? We can speak-

ISABELLA

I'd really like to meet with you now.
Please.

LAWRENCE

Very well.
Sit.

ISABELLA

Thank you.
I know I just got here, but --

LAWRENCE

That's correct. You did just get here.

ISABELLA

I want to do my best these next two weeks.

Charlotte said that freshmen are given private lessons to help them adjust to Iris. I was wondering if I could have something similar, because I'm... new.

Like you said, the amazing training at Iris doesn't even come close to my previous lessons --

LAWRENCE

Are you saying you think you aren't up to the task?

ISABELLA

No, no. No. I assure you, I am. I just want to be at my best for these next two weeks. I take auditions very seriously.

LAWRENCE

Well. While I appreciate your desire to improve, I don't think private lessons will be feasible. The freshman instructors all budget their time accordingly. But Viktor has an entire-

ISABELLA

I can imagine he's very busy. But I earned my spot at this school. Just as much as the freshman.

LAWRENCE

No, you did not earn your spot, it was given to you because someone else was deemed unfit. You have to earn it every day that you attend this Academy. To prove that you are fit.

ISABELLA

And I intend to do everything in my power to prove that. I would excel in lessons.

LAWRENCE

As Viktor informed me, when you fell on the first day of classes, you did not prove yourself. So why should I trust your word?

In fact, why shouldn't I send you home right now?

At the least, I'm beginning to think an adjustment is necessary. We can start you with the freshman, and have you spend four years here like everyone is supposed to-

ISABELLA

I can't afford four years. I'd go home if you held me back.

And the falling... It will never happen again.

I just need... A little help. Please?

LAWRENCE

Every single dancer to come through this school wants my help. Why should I invest my resources in you?

ISABELLA

So many dancers grow up taking ballet for granted. I don't. Getting into this school... It's my ticket out.

And I know the only reason I'm here is because someone had a mental breakdown. But I don't want to be just a replacement. I want to graduate from this institution having given it every drop of my energy and dedication. My life belongs to you for the next year.

So. Would you please consider arranging the private lessons?

A moment.

LAWRENCE

Two weeks of lessons. Just through the end of auditions.

ISABELLA

Really?

I mean, thank you, thank you, so much. This means the world to me, I promise you, you won't regret this-

LAWRENCE

(calling)

Charlotte.

Just come in, I know your ear has been pressed to the door.

CHARLOTTE

(muffled, through the door)

I hear Isabella gave you a run for your money.

The door to Lawrence's office creaks open.

LAWRENCE

I suppose she did.

CHARLOTTE

Plus, private lessons for new students are a ritual.

LAWRENCE

A tradition.

CHARLOTTE

Right.

A moment as something passes between Charlotte and Lawrence. Lawrence clears his throat.

LAWRENCE

Good, then.

Isabella, I'll speak with Viktor and arrange something.

ISABELLA

I truly can't tell you how much I appreciate it. Thank you.

LAWRENCE

Now then, if you'll excuse me.

I'll speak with you later, Charlotte.

They walk out of Lawrence's office. The door to the office clicks shut.

Keys jingle, and the door to Izzy's room opens.

CHARLOTTE

Well, thank god. Watching you struggle in class was going to get old fast. Plus, McKenzie doesn't deserve to be the only senior in private lessons.

ISABELLA

Is she going to be, like-

CHARLOTTE

It's about time she experienced some kind of struggle. And this is next to nothing, we're starting small.

See you in auditions.

Music plays, indicating that two weeks have passed. A bell rings.

In her room, Izzy brushes foundation onto her pointe shoes.

ISABELLA

These shoes are so DEAD.

CHARLOTTE

Izzy?

(no response)

Izzy? I know you're in there.

(no response)

Okay, I'm coming in.

Izzy's door clicks open.

ISABELLA

If you couldn't tell by me not answering the door, now really isn't a good time --

CHARLOTTE

Woah, okay. What's with the attitude?

ISABELLA

I'm just running late, okay? And these shoes are ruined-

CHARLOTTE

Two weeks of Viktor's private lessons will do that.

ISABELLA

-- but I have to pancake them before class.

CHARLOTTE

You can stop doing that --

ISABELLA

No, I can't. All the foundation I put on last week is coming off, they're all blotchy. Viktor will spend the first ten minutes grilling me on my "pancaking technique," and questioning whether I ever actually learned how to make my shoes match my skin. And then I'll be even more behind.

A heavy box thuds to the floor.

ISABELLA

What's in the box? A body?

CHARLOTTE

Pointe shoes.

ISABELLA

For who?

CHARLOTTE

You.

ISABELLA

I --
What are you talking about?

CHARLOTTE

Just open it.

Izzy opens the box.

ISABELLA

Are these-

CHARLOTTE

Gaynor Minden. Yep. They were miraculously in stock last week, so I figured I would pick you up a few pairs.

ISABELLA

I -- how much do I owe you?

CHARLOTTE

Oh please, it's on the school. Plus, not watching you fall in class is payment enough for me.

ISABELLA

(shocked)

I... Wow. How did you get my size?

CHARLOTTE

Your measurements were in your file.
Including the fact that you have wide metatarsals. No wonder you're accident prone.

ISABELLA

I can't possibly --

CHARLOTTE

Look, Headmaster Frye doesn't like showing favoritism towards certain students.
But then I reminded him of all the extra stuff you and I have to deal with.
And then I started listing all the steps I take to make my shoes the color that actually matches my skin.
So yeah. The shoes are on the school.

ISABELLA

This is... You literally just saved me hours and hours-

CHARLOTTE

I'm doing myself a favor. No disruptive falling in class, and no non-stop whining about it.

ISABELLA

Charlotte, I don't know how to thank you-

CHARLOTTE

When you get the part, you have to have the badass shoes to match.
Also, stop falling all over yourself thanking people for doing the bare minimum for you.
It's annoying.

ISABELLA

Okay. Thanks.
I mean. Noted.

Music plays.

SECTION C

KYLE

You nervous?

ISABELLA

You know what's weird? Not really.

VIKTOR

(calling)

We will begin final callbacks in a few moments. Please line up in alphabetical order out here in the hall. I will call you in one by one.

Charlotte, you will be going first.

KYLE

She always goes first. No questions asked.

ISABELLA

That must be nice.

KYLE

Right? I swear, the Headmaster will get her into any company she wants.

ISABELLA

I believe that. I mean, she's great.

KYLE

Yeah. And I mean, I'm not complaining. We get the benefits of being friends with her.

ISABELLA

... Is that why you're friends with Charlotte?

KYLE

Could you imagine yourself doing anything else?

ISABELLA

Uh, besides ballet? Nope.

KYLE

Me neither.

So why not do whatever it takes?

VIKTOR

(calling into the hallway)

New girl!

KYLE

Go, go. You got this.

Isabella passes Charlotte as she enters the studio.

ISABELLA

Charlotte, how did it go?

CHARLOTTE

(annoyingly vague)

Oh, I don't know. It's so hard to tell.

VIKTOR

Let's begin.

ISABELLA

McKenzie. You're already here.

VIKTOR

Yes, McKenzie asked to observe all the auditions, as to improve her own.

Or at least, give a good show of commitment.

(with a shift)

As I said, let's begin.

I am considering you both for the titular role of Giselle. You'll be doing Giselle's variation from act one.

Side by side. So I can compare your attempts.

The accompanist begins to play ballet music.

VIKTOR

And...

Begin.

Isabella and McKenzie begin dancing, breathing heavily.

VIKTOR

Pas marché, pas marché. You look like you're kicking a soccer ball, McKenzie. Wrong sport.

Arabesque. Hands, Isabella. Hands! Dead birds would have more life in them.

That's good. For you.

Stop. I've seen enough.

The music cuts out.

MCKENZIE

But sir-

VIKTOR

McKenzie. You've observed everyone's auditions, as you requested. Now, give us the room.

MCKENZIE
(coldly, to Izzy)

Break a leg.

The door opens and clicks shut as McKenzie leaves.

VIKTOR
Well. You seem to be proving me wrong, new girl.

ISABELLA
I'm glad.
I'm just sorry I ever gave you a reason to doubt me.

VIKTOR
My doubt hasn't evaporated quite yet.
Let's try one more thing. Center of the room.
Chassé, Arabesque, Penché, Failli
It's the --

ISABELLA
-- the combination. I've rehearsed it.

The music picks back up.

Viktor's snaps and accompanying ballet music speed up.

VIKTOR
Faster.
Pas de Bourrée, step step, Arabesque, Penché, Failli, pirouette attitude, arabesque, tour jeté, and finish.
Stop.

The music stops.

A silent moment, except for Izzy's labored breathing.

VIKTOR
Good, Isabella.
You are dismissed.

ISABELLA
Yes, sir.

The door opens and clicks shut.

KYLE
(whispering)
McKenzie looked pissed-

ISABELLA

Kyle, keep it down.

But yeah. She did.

Do people celebrate anything around here? Like maybe a "we survived callbacks" party tonight?

VIKTOR

(calling into the hallway)

Everyone inside.

KYLE

Here we go.

ISABELLA

What? That definitely wasn't enough time.

VIKTOR

Oh, believe me, it was plenty of time. The only question is, did you make the best of it?

I will be making my final decisions by early tomorrow morning. You will receive an email with the cast list by 10 AM, and you should immediately begin studying your roles.

We will dive into rehearsals right away. I will be doing the original choreography, of course.

With variations by Coralli and Perrot. Yes, watch the videos of the great Carlotta Grisi and the most talented dancers of all time performing your roles. You will fail to hold a candle to them.

But try anyway.

Class dismissed.

Time passes, and a bell rings.

KYLE

Guys, 10 AM cannot come fast enough.

Do we think it's really going to take him that long?

CHARLOTTE

It's Viktor. Who knows.

The sound of champagne popping.

MCKENZIE

Oh my god, you're going to get it all over the floor, Isabella.

ISABELLA

That's part of the fun of it. Ever heard of that, McKenzie? Fun?

Izzy pours the champagne into glasses.

MCKENZIE

Fine. Whatever.

ISABELLA

That's the spirit!
Come on, guys.
Cheers. To surviving auditions.

MCKENZIE

And to Viktor.

ISABELLA

You know what? Fine. And to Viktor, that brutal but well-intentioned man.

The sound of glasses clinking.

KYLE

I mean, aren't we getting ahead of ourselves? It's not really over yet, we don't know our roles. We don't want to jinx anything, cause, you know-

ISABELLA

I know, but we can still celebrate making it through auditions. Like you said, about the spirit thing, we don't have to know everything, we just have to sort of trust that-

MCKENZIE

Um, guys?
Oh my God, oh my God.
I'm Giselle.

KYLE

WHAT? He said the list wouldn't be out until tomorrow morning --

MCKENZIE

He emailed it.
Oh my God. I did it.

ISABELLA

What about the rest of us?

MCKENZIE

Oh sorry. I didn't check, I stopped reading after my name because then-

CHARLOTTE

I see the email, I'm opening it, I'm reading it aloud. Ready?

The sound of a heartbeat begins faintly underneath
Charlotte's words as she reads off roles.

CHARLOTTE

First, supporting roles...
I'll be playing Myrtha, the Queen of the Wilis.

KYLE

You'll be perfect.

CHARLOTTE

And the special ensemble parts...

Kyle and Izzy.

It looks like you'll both be doing duets in the ensemble.

Partners to be decided.

The heartbeat stops.

CHARLOTTE

There's a big asterisk, along with the note "depends on the boys' availability."

Exciting.

KYLE

(under her breath, frustrated)

Great.

MCKENZIE

I can't believe I did it.

I mean, I can, but...

Wow. Just wow.

KYLE

Yeah, wow. Cool, cool, cool. I get to do ANOTHER duet. Get tossed around the stage until I can't see straight. Because, apparently, I am nothing without a muscular dude.

MCKENZIE

Kyle, chill. You really need to watch the self-pity, okay? We know, you have self-esteem issues, but seriously?

KYLE

Okay, okay, I know. It's fine. I'm working on it.

The whole partnering thing just really... it gets to me sometimes.

ISABELLA

So McKenzie, do you still think it was all just the weed? You know, now that you were "chosen?"

MCKENZIE

What? Um. I mean, Viktor picked me. For a reason, so-

CHARLOTTE

Because the spirit in the theatre chose you.

MCKENZIE

No. Viktor picked me because I am the best for the role. I wanted it the most.

ISABELLA

So suddenly you're better than the rest of us? Is that it? End of story?
You know that's not true. You're not God's gift to ballet all of a sudden now that-

MCKENZIE

Excuse me?

KYLE

Whoa, guys. You know what, we all got parts, right? We're all going to kill it and get company offers. I'm manifesting it.
Congratulations to us! Right?

MCKENZIE

Right. Thank you.
You really thought you had it, didn't you Izzy?

ISABELLA

You don't own Viktor, McKenzie.

MCKENZIE

Clearly, neither do you.
But I don't know, Izzy.
It felt pretty easy.

ISABELLA

I'm sorry, I --
What?

MCKENZIE

I mean, I don't know what those private lessons were like for you.
But Izzy. Come on. Do you want to know what I think?

ISABELLA

No, not really, actually.

MCKENZIE

He's looking for your pain, your passion, your anger. But instead of painting the wall red with it, you chose... a gross gray. A terrified, goody-two-shoes, plain and dreary gray.
Charlotte even gave you a running start. With your whole sob story getting spread all over the school.
What a waste.

ISABELLA

Jeez, McKenzie. Tell me how you really feel.

MCKENZIE

I think that covers it.

ISABELLA

You think just because you read my file, you know everything there is to know about me.
Is that it?

MCKENZIE

Yeah, actually. You're proving yourself to be just what's in your file, and nothing more.
You use your story to seem all desperate and deserving. But I don't think you actually want this.

ISABELLA

What is that even supposed to mean --
Of course I want this, more than anything-

MCKENZIE

If you do, you don't show it. You don't put in the work, you complain all the time, and you just think you can skate by on this whole mysterious, new girl, diversity slot persona that-

KYLE

McKenzie. Come on.

ISABELLA

"Diversity slot?" Give me a break, McKenzie.

MCKENZIE

Like Viktor said, you can't just put on a new pair of shoes that you didn't even earn and waltz in expecting the principal role.

ISABELLA

Don't lecture me from your ivory tower about how I should live my life.

MCKENZIE

Last time I checked, you're the one with your head in the clouds.
You really want this? Then show me. I dare you.
Newsflash: having divorced parents and a dead brother doesn't automatically get you everything you want.

Isabella lunges at McKenzie and grabs her.

ISABELLA

Do NOT bring Ian into this --

MCKENZIE

This is the best you've got? This is what "wanting it" looks like to you?

KYLE

Guys, come on!
Izzy, let go of her --

MCKENZIE

The professional world is going to eat you alive. But look at it this way, at least your family won't be around to see your failure-

Then Isabella hits McKenzie in the face. Hard.

CHARLOTTE

Isabella. STOP.

MCKENZIE

Oh my God, oh my God.
You... My nose!

A buzzing begins to fill the air.

ISABELLA

Oh God.

MCKENZIE

You know what? Lose your shit, throw your toddler tantrums. See if I care.
Because for every self-destructing dancer, there's another one right behind her ready and waiting to take her place.
You should know that better than anyone.

A moment.

ISABELLA

I... I have to go.

Isabella runs out of the room. The buzzing fades out.

Hours later. The ballet studio door opens.

ISABELLA

Viktor?

VIKTOR

Jesus, Isabella... How long have you been sitting here?

ISABELLA

I, um... I saw the cast list.
May I speak with you a moment?

VIKTOR

Now is not a good time-

ISABELLA

Please. I would like to know why I didn't get the role of Giselle.

VIKTOR

I really don't want to do this right now.
Why don't you come by my office later and we can have a little chat, just the two of us, and we can-

ISABELLA

I would like to know now. Please.

VIKTOR

You just arrived at this school. No matter how talented you are, you have to show everyone you were meant to be here.
There are girls at this school that have been working twice as long and ten times harder than you have. They have proven track records, while all you've done since you arrived here is fail.

ISABELLA

Over the past two weeks, I showed you how-

VIKTOR

You can't honestly have expected you'd walk into one of the most prestigious ballet academies in the country and land a principal role, did you? That assumption alone should be grounds for expulsion. But I don't run this school. Yet.

ISABELLA

I... Our lessons were going well.
I thought you had my back.

VIKTOR

It's not my job to have your back. It's my job to teach you, to see if you have potential, and then sculpt and carve until you are so ready for the real world that you feel like you've already lived it. On a good day, Isabella, our lessons were mediocre. They were to ensure that you were caught up, and at the right level. I met with you because the Headmaster told me to. I wouldn't have otherwise wasted my precious time. Not until you were truly ready.
Your ambition serves you, but not if you let it control you. You can't see yourself clearly. You aren't ready.

ISABELLA

I promise, I am. I literally bled in my audition. I-

VIKTOR

A little blood means nothing to me. The fact that you don't understand that shows I made the right decision.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm tired of being disappointed by you. For example, I'd like the last five minutes of my life back, but unless I'm mistaken, you can never give me that. Just like in lessons, when you were never able to give me even a 90-degree arabesque.

So, to make myself perfectly clear. You are not ready, and you are not my Giselle.

(sighs)

Now, if you'll excuse me. I have other students to teach.

Isabella walks out. The studio door slams.

She returns to her room and dials a number.

IAN

(outgoing voicemail)

Hi, this is Ian. Leave me a message, and I'll have my people call your people. Later.

A beep.

ISABELLA

Hey Ian. It's me. I... I'm...

A metallic sound begins to play underneath.

How the fuck did I get here? I was angry at myself, for messing this whole thing up, and then the next thing I knew... I was hitting her. Like it was all her fault. And the blood...

I don't snap like that. It's not me.

There's something about this place...

And I really thought I was getting somewhere. But now... it's like I'm back on the floor again.

I miss you. You were just so good at knowing what to say...

You know, sometimes I feel dumb recording these. And then other times, I think you might actually talk back...

The sound fades out, and then, out of nowhere:

CHARLOTTE

Who's that?

ISABELLA

Oh my-

You have got to stop doing that.

CHARLOTTE

And you've got to stop causing injuries.

The door creaks open.

KYLE

Oh sorry, sorry --

But Izzy, we've been really worried about you. You ran out of your own damn room, and I really wasn't-

CHARLOTTE

Come on, Isabella. Lying around and leaving depressing voicemails isn't going to fix any of this.

KYLE

Okay, whoa, let's-

CHARLOTTE

So you hit her. Big deal.
I mean, you're going to have to apologize to her.

KYLE

Um. Did you hear everything she said?

CHARLOTTE

Izzy's still going to apologize. McKenzie got the part, we didn't. That's how it goes.
But Izzy... apparently you've some guts. Some... desperate drive, whatever you want to call it.
You made that clear. For better or for worse.

KYLE

Yeah. I don't think McKenzie knew what hit her. Literally. You just... it was kind of amazing.
You know, she can get... really caught up in the moment sometimes.
But that was... A lot. Even for her.

A knock. A door creaking open.

MCKENZIE

Well. The gang's all here.
You know, Izzy... I could tell someone you hit me.

ISABELLA

I know.
But I'd appreciate it if you didn't.

MCKENZIE

Did it occur to you that this would be the moment for an apology?
I brought weed brownies, you know.

KYLE

Of course you did.

MCKENZIE

As a peace offering. But it seems like you don't want one, so I'll just-

ISABELLA

McKenzie, wait --

MCKENZIE

Maybe if I eat them all, my nose will stop pulsing --

ISABELLA

McKenzie. I'm sorry. Okay?

MCKENZIE

What was that?

ISABELLA
You heard me.

MCKENZIE
Fine. Whatever. I won't tell.
But I could.
And you'd be gone in two seconds.
So, Izzy, don't forget. You owe me.

ISABELLA
I know.

MCKENZIE
Good. And you know what else?

(The outro music begins to play underneath)

I worked really hard for Giselle. There's a reason I got the role.
It chose me.
Maybe you all should start acting like it.

VOICE
Trick City Productions presents Iris.

Starring Valyn Turner, Dani Palmer, Sophie Smith, Amanda Harris. Featuring Michael Sultana, Ivan Walks, and John Tomlinson.

Written by Emma Grasso Levine. Directed by Alex Teman.

Original music by Alex Arlotta. Sound design by Jacob Montgomery.

Executive producers Sophia Ray, Alex Teman, Angela Dogani, and Grace Goble.

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(Outro music swells, and cuts out)