**Prologue**

*Lights on. No props, Alia enters stage right.*

**Alia:** I have had an obsession with dance since I could walk. I remember watching my favorite dancers on TV and wishing I could grow up to be just like them. *Takes a deep breath, pauses.*  But when I was seventeen, I remember trying to perfect my leap and before I knew it I was on the floor in pain and there were paramedics lifting me onto a gurney. Now I teach kids that were my age when I had the accident. . .

*Lights off.*

**Parados**

*No props, lights on. Chorus enters stage left.*

**Karter:** Alia hasn’t been the same. And you can’t blame her. When her career was just taking off she broke her knee, and ended it all.

**Charlotte:** She now has her favorite student, whose name is Camila. She sees the most potential in her, our friend, Camila, who has an upcoming audition.

**Preston:** Alia wants the best for her, but she has a reputation for sometimes putting too much pressure on her dancers.

**Charlotte:** She only wants what is best for them, really. She has all the right intentions.

**Karter:** But sometimes those “good intentions” backfire. Badly.

*Lights off.*

**Scene 1**

*Lights on, Alia on stage, chorus members on stage warming up for dance. Camila enters stage left to center. Stop warming up, all stand.*

**Alia:** Alright everyone, work on your dance routines. I’ll be walking by to check on you.

*Camila doing routine chorus in background, Alia watches Camila closely.*

**Camila:** (*concerned)* Is something wrong?

**Alia:** You’re auditioning for the New York Professional Dance Co. right?

**Camila:** *(Confused)* Yeah. . .Why?

**Alia:** Well. . .Have you seen what the other girls look like? They’re really small. . .You may need to lose some weight before auditions.

**Camila:** Really? *(Looks down at the floor)* I. . .Um. . . I guess so.

**Alia:** Go through the routine again, you have some work to do. This audition is big, after all.

**Camila:** Okay. *Runs through routine again.*

*Alia walks away, observes other dancers. Comes back to Alia.*

**Camila:** Ms. Alia, I have a ton of homework and a test to study for. I was wondering if I could leave early today and maybe-

**Alia:** No. If anything you should be staying later. You have an important audition, you need to work harder, and get yourself on a stricter diet. *Camila stares at the floor, uncomfortable.* If you can pull this audition off, you will have an amazing future in dance. You need to learn how to balance all of this in order to succeed later on in your dancing career.

**Camila:** But-

**Alia:** *(angry)* No buts! I’m only helping you. This routine *has* to be perfect. (pause) Run through it again.

*Camila runs through routine.*

*Lights off.*

**Chorus 1**

*Lights on*.

**Charlotte:** Alia has good intentions when it comes to helping Camila.

**Karter:** But it may not be the best thing for her, losing weight when she’s already petite.

**Preston:** There’s too much pressure on her, too much stress, she only wants to do her best.

**Charlotte:** She won’t give up, no matter how hard it may be.

**Karter:** She will push herself to try her hardest, so that she will succeed.

**Preston:** But I’m not sure that putting herself through this what she needs.

*Lights off.*

**Scene 2**

*Lights on, Camila in sitting on bench in center stage, Eric enters stage left. Camilla stands*

**Eric:** Hi Camila! *Hugs her, she unenthusiastically hugs back, pulls away quickly and sits down.*

**Camila:** Hi Eric. . .

**Eric:** You okay? *(sits down)* You seem a little tired. . .

**Camila:** Yeah. . .Yeah. . .Just tired.

**Eric:** Oh, well good thing I’m taking you home. *Looks at her in confusion, curiosity.*

**Camila:** *(Annoyed)* What are you looking at?

**Eric:** You look different.

**Camila**: What do you mean?

**Eric:** Camila. . .Have you lost weight?

**Camila:** No! What’s it to you?!

**Eric:** I’m your boyfriend, that’s what it is to me. Are you okay? Honestly. . .You’re acting different. Looking different. And now you’re being defensive.

**Camila:** There’s nothing wrong with me! I’m just stressed, alright?! God, leave me alone.

You’re worse than my mom!

**Eric:** I know that I sound overbearing. But I care about you, I don’t want to see you like this. You look sick. *Really sick.*

**Camila**: Just leave it alone. Leave *me* alone!

**Eric:** Forgetting I’m your ride home?

**Camila:** No. Just. . .Just take me home. I have homework and I need to practice the routine again.

**Eric**: Maybe you should take a break. We haven’t gone out in-

**Camila**: Listen, we’ll have plenty of time for that after I get into the dance company. I’m fine! *(sighs, in a calmer tone)* I’m just a little stressed out right now. I promise, everything is gonna be okay. *(smiles at Eric)* If it makes you feel better, I’ll just. . .I’ll gain a little weight alright?

**Eric**: *Smiles.* Good, I just worry about you.

**Camilla:** I know. Maybe you worry a little too much.

**Eric:** I say I worry just enough.

*Camilla smiles at him, looks away and frowns, holding her head.*

*Lights off.*

**Chorus 2**

*Lights on.*

**Preston**: Now Alia has come between Camilla and Eric.

**Charlotte:** But he won’t stand for it- he knows something is different.

**Karter**: He sees the stress, the sickness, the sleepiness in her eyes. He sees that she is breaking down, he’s smart enough to see past her disguise.

**Preston:** Camilla doesn’t want to admit how bad she feels, she just wants her dance career. Nothing else seems to matter.

**Charlotte:** But what happens when Eric decides to confront the woman making her suffer?

**Karter:** Will Alia see what she is doing, or just continue to break her?

*Lights off.*

**Scene 3**

*Lights on.*

*Alia on center stage cleaning up after dance. Eric enters stage right, walks over to Alia.*

**Eric:** Alia, I need to talk to you.

**Alia:** About?

**Eric:** Camilla. She looks. . .She looks awful. She’s sickly skinny, I haven’t seen her eat in god knows how long. She tells me she’s okay, but it’s been a month since she told me she’d gain weight, but she hasn’t. If anything, she’s lost more. Something is wrong. Something feels wrong. I. . .I thought maybe she’d listen to someone like you, you know her better-

**Alia:** Yes, I know her better. I know her well enough to know that what’s she’s doing is right. She has to be *perfect*. Her dancing, her weight, her looks, everything. And if I didn’t say something, the people at the auditions would. And it would crush her.

**Eric:** *(upset, then increasing in anger)* This is crushing her! She looks horrible, I took her out for ice cream, and got her her favorite on the menu- she took two bites and then she went to the bathroom. You’re telling her to do this?! To starve herself until she dies?! At this rate she won’t live long enough to even go to the audition. She won’t listen to me. Your opinion is the only one that matters to her! Which is why you need to tell her to stop doing this to herself and stop putting her under *so much pressure.* I love her, and I hate seeing her like this. She’s tired, she’s weak, she’s. . .She looks more breakable than glass and it’s scary as *hell*!

**Alia:** Look, I know her, I know what she needs to look like, I know how she needs to dance, I know when she’s sick or healthy. *She is fine.* This audition is what matters most in her life. You are nothing to her but a distraction from what she needs. You get in the way of her success. Maybe the best thing for you to do, is to butt out of her life.

**Eric:** Is this more important to you?! A stupid audition is more important to you than her health?!

**Alia:** It’s not a stupid audition! This is a chance of a *lifetime* for her, and the only thing that’s holding her back right now, is you!

**Eric:** But-

**Alia:** Out of my studio, please. I’m closing up, anyways.

**Eric:** (*Sarcastically, angrily)* Thanks for the help!

*Eric storms off set, exits stage left. Lights off.*

**Chorus 3**

**Preston:** Eric is worried about what Camilla has been going through for so long.

**Charlotte:** But Alia doesn’t understand how Camilla is no longer strong.

**Karter:** No one can stand to see her struggling, her eyes are watery whenever she speaks. Her laugh is tired, her smile is weak. Her body is breaking down piece by piece, soon there will be nothing left. She’ll have no dream to complete.

**Charlotte:** Alia has to learn that what she’s doing is wrong- the affect she has on Camila is tearing her down.

**Preston:** Camila can’t survive under these circumstances. It’s not just about an audition, but impressing the person’s opinion that means the most to her.

**Karter:** We all know she’s a determined young girl, she’ll do whatever it takes to be the best dancer in the world.

**Scene 4**

*Lights on.*

**Alia:** I haven’t danced in. . .In forever. . .But I’ve been dying to just, try again. And I guess I could now. Who knows? Maybe I’ll be okay, maybe. . .Maybe my knee is a little better. I haven’t used it other than to walk ever since the accident happened, so. . .*Takes a deep breath.* Here goes nothing. *Alia attempts to dance before falling immediately. She scoots on to the edge of the stage, takes a moment to put her face in her hands before lifting it up and speaking.*No one gets it. No one understands what I went through- what I try to protect my dancers from. I was picked on all through high school. *Uses air quotes.* *Mimicking voice.* ‘How are *you* a dancer? What do you weigh? Almost 200, right? Your odds of being a professional dancer are about as likely as me winning the lotto.’ What I’m doing is right. I know it’s right. I know what’s right for her. She’ll thank me later. That Eric kid is being dramatic- a little weight loss never killed anyone. *Takes a deep breath, tears up.* I just want her to be the best. I want Camilla to have everything I didn’t. I want her to achieve every dream she has, she deserves it. But what if I am pushing her too much? What if she is better off doing things on her own? Is this really. . . *Healthy?* Sure it is. . .All dancers go through it. It’s just. . .It’s something we have to deal with. The pressure motivates her to do her best, I know that. But. . .But I should still ask her how she’s feeling. I wished someone did the same for me.

*Lights go off.*

**Chorus 4**

*Karter, Charlotte and Preston on center stage lights on.*

**Karter:** Alia doesn’t understand what she is putting Camilla through. Eric tried to explain, he tried to show her reason. But she’s so passionate about living her own dreams through her student. Who’s running out of time, whose clock is ticking. . .Whose life is slipping away.

**Charlotte:** She keeps practicing, day, after day, after day. Her time is running out. She has to change. Only Alia can undo what she’s done. Maybe she can. Maybe something will click in her strong-minded head, maybe she’ll talk to her, maybe she’ll save her before Camilla is on her death bed.

**Preston:** Camila can’t continue, she can’t move forward. Not if she’s starving, weak, and sick. Not if she’s dying, not living, not strong. She can’t go to an audition, where she may just collapse, where she’ll take one breath that will be her last.

**Karter:** If only Alia could see what she’s doing to cause her so much pain.

**Charlotte:** But she doesn’t because Alia has so much she wishes to gain- from being the best teacher, for having the best dancer. Despite how poorly she’s making our helpless Camilla feel.

**Preston:** That doesn’t matter to her. She only sees what she chooses, but one day. . .One day she’ll see how much it made her lose.

*Lights off.*

**Exodus**

*Camila is laying on a bed, dead. Spotlight on Camila.*

**Eric:** *(Eric knocks on door not on stage, hitting wall)*Hey, Camila! *No response, knocks a little louder.* Camilla? *Knocks again. Walks in. Looks around.* Camilla? Are you home? *Walks towards the bed. Taps Camilla.* Camilla? Hey, I know you’re tired. Camilla? *Says to himself;* That’s weird. . .She’s not a deep sleeper. *Volume raises.* Camilla? Camilla? Wake up, c’mon. We gotta go. *Pauses, gets nervous.* What’s going on. . .? Camilla?! *Grabs her wrist, feels pulse.* Oh

god. . .Camilla?! *Tries to hear a heartbeat, doesn’t hear anything. Shakes her*. C’mon Camilla! Wake the hell up, this isn’t funny! *Sobbing.* Camilla. . .Please, wake up. Please. . .You’re gonna be late for dance, today was our anniversary, I was gonna take you to dinner. . .Camilla. No, no, no this can’t be happening! Please wake up, I’ll do anything. Please. *Kneels in front of the bed.* Camilla why didn’t you tell me something was wrong?! You didn’t have to do this! *Pauses.* Alia. she did this to her! *Stands up, yanks cell phone out of his pocket. Dials, the phone rings, phone on speaker. Alia answers.*

**Alia:** Hello?

**Eric:** This is Eric-

**Alia:** Listen kid, I’ve already talked to you-

**Eric:** It’s not about me. *Sniffs.* Get over to Camilla’s house, *now.*

**Alia:** Why-

**Eric:** Dammit, just get over here!

**Alia:** Oh. . .Okay. . .

*Hangs up, Eric kneels in front of the bed again. Grabs Camilla’s limp hand.*

**Eric:** This shouldn’t have happened to you. . .It shouldn’t have happened.

*Alia enters stage right.*

**Alia:** What was so important-

*Eric moves, revealing Camilla on the bed.*

**Eric:** Do you see what *you* did? *You* caused this!

**Alia:** *Tears fill her eyes.* She’s. . .She’s-

**Eric:** She’s dead and you killed her! You starved her to death! You called her fat when she was

perfect and *killed her!*

**Alia:** *Crying.* I didn’t mean for this to happen. I never wanted this. I just wanted her to do what

was best and-

**Eric:** Well this is far from best! She’s dead and there’s no way to bring her back! *Walks over to a wall and punches it. Takes a pause, slumps on to the floor, puts his face in his hands and cries.* She didn’t deserve this. I was in love with her. . .You killed her.

**Alia:** *Still hysteric.* I didn’t mean to-

**Eric:** I *hate* this! I *hate* what you did to her. And most of all, *I hate you.*

**Alia:** You have every right to hate me! I hate myself. *Still crying.* I just wanted her to succeed-

**Eric:** You lived your broken dreams through her and now she’s dead because of it.

**Alia:** I don’t need this right now- I don’t need to hear you yell at me and treat me like this!

*Alia walks off stage.*

**Eric:** That’s it, walk away, avoid your problems like the coward you are! *Returns to spot next to Camilla, crying.*

*Lights go off, actors move while in the dark, props are moved.*