

HARMONY

By Howard Sewell

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FADE IN:

EXT. CHICAGO - NIGHT

As the L-Train rumbles through a warehouse district, a faint sound of dance music whispers in the night. The music gets louder as the train moves past.

INT. CHICAGO DANCE STUDIO - NIGHT

Warehouse dance studio, sweat pours off the dancers and the mirror fogs up. Dance Teacher, DESMOND HOWARD, 35 year-old Black Englishman, directs TEENAGE DANCERS in jazz/hip-hop dance routine to "Love Don't Cost a Thing," by Jennifer Lopez.

The kids work hard as Desmond drives through a challenging routine. Desmond opens the door of the studio to clear the fog and turns back to the dancers.

DESMOND

(English accent)

All right, this time we go full
out!

Combination of SIGHS and WHOOPS from the students.

MONTAGE - dance combinations led by Desmond.

Kids leaving and Desmond sits alone in the studio. He gets up and walks to the door. Hesitating, Desmond grabs a sign and places it on the door as he walks out. The sign says "Closing for good."

INT. CHICAGO INSIDE CAR - EARLY MORNING

Outside the studio, mother/Wife, KARIS HOWARD, 30+ white woman and 9 year old daughter, HALEY, anxiously sit in the car. Karis holds an open envelope, pulling the letter out to read again:

'Karis Howard, we appreciate you joining the Harmony School System and welcome you as a teacher at Blaine High School.'

Karis puts the letter back in the envelope and places back in her purse. Haley uses her inhaler. A loud thud outside the car. Karis and Haley look back to see Desmond closing the door to the studio.

KARIS

(Turns to Haley)

Daddy might be sad, so don't talk to him unless he starts the conversation.

HALEY

Ok Mommy.

Desmond gets in the car. Karis touches his hand, but he pulls away.

DESMOND

Off to Texas.

Desmond puts the car in gear and they drive down the road.

EXT. HARMONY TEXAS - DAY

The radio plays in the car. The song concludes and the RADIO ANNOUNCER comes on.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

That song was done by a new Texas artist, Nora Jones. It's making its way up the charts. Next we have to break into normal programming from the President of the United States, George W. Bush.

Desmond clicks off the radio, as they enter Harmony, TX. As they pass the wooden sign with the town name, the sign suddenly falls to one side and begins swinging.

The Howards drive into town, passing through a traditional old Texas main street. An old man nods his head toward the couple, a cowboy tips his hat, an old woman just stares and points.

Karis smiles and waves hi. Desmond looks bewildered and awkwardly makes a "peace sign" to people on the sidewalk.

HALEY

Mom, where do they park their horses?

EXT. CAUFIELD HOME - DAY

Karis, Desmond and Haley arrive at Karis' parents house. They get out of the car and walk toward the house. SARA CAUFIELD, 60 year-old white woman walks out to greet them.

SARA
Come here with my grand-baby!

Sara walks up and takes Haley, hugging her.

SARA (CONT'D)
What a beautiful girl.

HALEY
Oh Grandma!

SARA
I guess I'll give you guys a hug
too.

Sara hugs Desmond and Karis. They walk into the house.

INT. CAUFIELD HOUSE LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DESMOND
Mrs. Caufield, I really appreciate
you allowing us to stay here.

SARA
Well, can't have my granddaughter
living on the street.

KARIS
We wouldn't actually be living on
the street.

SARA
Good to have you home, baby doll.
Now y'all come in and wet your
whistle after that long drive. I've
got supper cook-in'.

KARIS
Where's Daddy?

SARA
Oh, he's around.

DESMOND
Mrs. Caufield, I need to use the
loo.

SARA
What's that?

HALEY
He needs to go pee.

SARA
Oh, it's upstairs on the left.

DESMOND
Thanks.

SARA
I need to grab something from the
backroom, I'll be right back.

Desmond heads up the stairs, as Karis and Haley sit at the
kitchen table.

INT. CAUFIELD HOUSE UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Desmond opens the closed bathroom door to see John Caufield
sitting on the toilet.

JOHN
Damn! Don't they teach knocking in
England?

DESMOND
Very sorry sir.

Desmond closes the door and heads back downstairs.

INT. CAUFIELD HOUSE LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

KARIS
That was quick.

DESMOND
Uh, it was occupied.

Karis laughs. Sara walks back in with a gift box.

SARA
I got Haley a welcome to Texas
present.

KARIS
Mom!

SARA
Mom, nothin'. I'm tickled pink that
you're home. This is for Haley.

HALEY
(She opens the box)
Cool boots. Thanks Grandma.

SARA
Try them on and see if they fit.

KARIS
Mom, that is so sweet.

SARA
(Whispering to Karis)
She deserves it. That asthma
suffering and all.

KARIS
The doctor says that dry West Texas
weather should help.

John walks in.

SARA
John check out these boots on your
granddaughter.

John reaches down and hugs Haley and sets her back in Sara's
lap.

HALEY
See my boots, Grandpa.

JOHN
Yeah, my little Cowgirl.

KARIS
Hey Dad, you're looking good.

Karis stands to hug her dad. Desmond stands as well and
reaches out his hand to shake.

DESMOND
Hello, Mr. Caufield.

John nods his head and turns his attention to Sara.

JOHN
When's dinner?

SARA
It's ready hon, let's eat!

INT. CAUFIELD HOUSE KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING

MONTAGE - Dinner scene of family eating, talking, playing
with Haley.

John gets up from the dinner table.

JOHN

I've got to load some feed and haul
it over to Junior's place tomorrow.

Karis elbows Desmond.

DESMOND

MR. Caufield, I'd like to give you
a hand.

JOHN

Well, those are 100-pound bags

John looks over and gets "a look" from Sara and Karis.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Oh Hell, come on.

John and Desmond walk out of the house. Sara and Karis look
at each other and laugh.

EXT. HAY BARN - NIGHT

John and Desmond walk to the hay barn. John opens the door.
John's pickup is in the barn.

JOHN

Alright, Mr. Fancy pants, be
careful 'cause these bags are
heavy.

Desmond grabs the first bag and throws it easily on to the
truck.

DESMOND

I guess I left my fancy pants back
in Chicago.

John raises his brow, then start hauling bags into the truck.
Desmond moves twice the bags that John handles.

EXT. CAUFIELD PLACE - NIGHT

Sara, Karis and Haley meet John and Desmond outside.

SARA

John, let's show them the studio
and house.

They all walk over to an old barn and go inside.

JOHN

I don't know about turning this into a studio, but you have plenty of room and a place to live upstairs.

DESMOND

Well, I'm handy, so I think we'll manage.

SARA

Everyone must be tired, so let's get to bed.

Goodnight hugs all around.

EXT. CAUFIELD PLACE - CONTINUOUS

John and Sara walk back to their house.

SARA

How did he do?

JOHN

Well, he is stronger than he looks.

SARA

Oh?

JOHN

He handled that feed like it was nothing. Now, let's see if he can build a business out of a barn.

INT. STUDIO/HOUSE - NIGHT

Karis and Desmond lying in bed.

KARIS

How'd it go with my Dad?

DESMOND

I held my own.

KARIS

You know you are a lot like my Dad.

DESMOND

How's that? I don't drive a pickup and I can't ride a horse.

KARIS

No silly, tough on the outside, but warm and soft on the inside.

Pokes him in the stomach and laughs.

DESMOND

Seriously, can we talk about a plan?

KARIS

(Yawning)

Tomorrow. Let's get some sleep.

EXT. DAY

Karis and Desmond walking around town. Karis points to a building.

KARIS

There's the competition. I have to warn you that Lucy Dunn is a tough nut.

DESMOND

Every nut cracks.

INT. LUCY DUNN STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Karis and Desmond walk into Lucy Dunn's Dance Studio. Lucy's behind the counter and looks up as they enter.

LUCY

As I live and breathe, Karis Caufield, how in the world are you?

KARIS

Doing good Lucy...Looks like you're doing ok.

LUCY

I always said when we cheered, that I was goin' to open my own dance studio. I'm five years in business and look at all these trophies.

KARIS

Congratulations Lucy....This is my husband, Desmond Howard.

LUCY

Well Karis, he is quite the catch.
Tall, DARK and handsome.

DESMOND

You could say she danced right into
my life.

LUCY

I bet she did. K, you know I'm
engaged to Billy now.

KARIS

Congratulations. I've not thought
about Billy Payne in years.

LUCY

Yeah, Billy the Kid is the coach at
the high school.

KARIS

Huh. I guess I'll be seeing him
soon at school.

LUCY

Do what?

KARIS

Yeah, I got a job as the gym coach.

LUCY

Well, ain't that something. You
know I coach the cheerleaders.

KARIS

That's super, Lucy.

LUCY

Well, what can I do you for?

DESMOND

We're opening a studio and wanted
to check out the competition.

LUCY

Isn't that precious.

DESMOND

I'd like to see what dancing is
like in Harmony.

LUCY

How about you showing me what dancin' is like where you come from?

DESMOND

Sure, let's do it.

LUCY

What the hell, I got five minutes until jazz class starts.

Lucy, Karis and Desmond walk into the dance room. Kids are stretching in the back of class, others talking in the hallway. Lucy starts the CD player with a Broadway tune.

LUCY (CONT'D)

How does this music suit you?

DESMOND

Actually, do you have something a little more funky?

Lucy changes the CD and plays "All for You," by Janet Jackson. Desmond nods his approval and moves to the center of the room.

Desmond begins his dance with a few hip-hop moves, then floats into precise ballet technique. He drops to the floor and break dances. The kid watching mouths drop open. Lucy turns off the music.

LUCY

That was interesting.

DESMOND

Thanks for your time, Lucy.

KARIS

I'll see you, Luc.

Desmond and Karis walk out of the classroom.

LUCY

See y'all later.

DANCE STUDENT

Who was that?

LUCY

She used to be the head cheerleader at Blaine. Now she just married to that Nigger.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF THE DUNN STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

KARIS

I think you got their attention.

DESMOND

That was the point, right? Did you notice, they had no guys in class.

KARIS

This is Texas, darlin'. Boys don't dance.

DESMOND

There will be guys taking my classes. By the way, who is Billy the Kid?

KARIS

An old boyfriend. He was the high school quarterback.

DESMOND

Anyone I should be jealous of?

KARIS

Only if he were the last man on earth!

INT. JOHN'S PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

Desmond and John ride to town in silence.

DESMOND

Thanks for helping me get the flooring.

JOHN

You've got a lot of work ahead.

DESMOND

Yeah, but we will get there.

- BEAT -

JOHN

So, you really think you can make a go of this studio thing?

DESMOND

I've done it for years.

- BEAT -

JOHN
So you've got a plan?

DESMOND
Yes, I have a plan.

JOHN
I hope so.

DESMOND
Listen, I can see we're doing some
kind of dance here.

(BEAT)
I'm going to take care of your
daughter and granddaughter.

JOHN
Good.

DESMOND
Good.

JOHN
Sense we're dancing, how about a
little music.

John turns on a country tune, 'Luckenbach, Texas' by Wayland Jennings.

Desmond rolls his eyes and turns toward the passenger window. They drive in silence the rest of the way to the store.

INT. BARN/STUDIO - DAY

Desmond and Karis installing mirrors, flooring and ballet bar in studio. They sit down on the floor and take a break. John walks into the studio.

JOHN
Looks like you lay down a pretty
nice floor.

DESMOND
I worked as a carpenter to pay for
school.

JOHN
Karis, what the bar for? You
serving' drinks?

KARIS
Daddy, that's a ballet barre, you
hold onto it while you warm up.

Karis demonstrates the position.

JOHN
Oh hell, I know what it is. I was
just making a joke.

KARIS
Sure Daddy.

Haley walks out rubbing her eyes.

HALEY
Grandpa!

JOHN
Hey, baby doll.

HALEY
Can I take a ride on your tractor?

JOHN
It's up to your Mom.

Karis and Desmond exchange looks and nod. Karis grabs a mask.

KARIS
Yeah, but she has to wear a mask.

JOHN
Come on Haley, let's take a ride.

HALEY
Alright!

KARIS
Look like he's warming up.

DESMOND
Who can resist our little Haley?

KARIS
No, to you.

DESMOND
If my dazzling personality and good
looks don't get him, my carpenter
skills will.

INT. BARN/STUDIO - DAY

ALICE and RAYJEAN MARSHALL walk into the studio. Alice, 40's white woman dressed in her nicest clothes, with plenty of jewelry. Alice walks over to Karis and Desmond, while Rayjean, seventeen looks at the posters on break dancing.

DESMOND

Can I help you?

ALICE

I'm Alice Marshall, and I think we can help each other.

KARIS

Ms. Marshall, I'm Karis...

ALICE

...Oh, I know who you are and your mama told me you are opening this studio.

DESMOND

That's right.

ALICE

This here's my daughter, Rayjean. She happens to be the best tapper in West Texas. Unfortunately, she was not appreciated by that Lucy Dunn woman.

DESMOND

Well, that's too bad for Lucy. Rayjean, do you want to audition?

RAYJEAN

Yes sir.

ALICE

Rayjean, you heard the man, get goin'.

Rayjean lumbers over to Karis and hands her a music CD and moves into place. As the music plays, Rayjean moves methodically through a routine, showing genuine tap skills, but little passion.

As she finishes, Alice jumps up and claps wildly. Desmond and Karis join the applause.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Didn't I tell you, she is something!

DESMOND

She sure is. Rayjean, we would be delighted if you join our company and take classes here.

ALICE

Oh yes, yes, yes.

RAYJEAN

(Looks at her mom)

Thank you that would be very nice.

ALICE

Ok, now your mama told me that rehearsals start in a week.

DESMOND

That is the plan.

ALICE

She also told me that you might be strapped for cash in the beginning.

DESMOND

That's true.

ALICE

I want to be a booster for your studio.

KARIS

Well, that's very nice, but...

ALICE

..No buts darlin'. I'm goin' to write you a check right now for \$1000 to secure Rayjean's place in the company and get you on your feet.

DESMOND

Ms. Marshall...

ALICE

That's Alice.

DESMOND

Alice, that is very generous, but...

ALICE

...I told you no buts.
(tears out her check)
Here is your check and we will see you next week.

Alice and Rayjean shake hands with Desmond and Karis, before heading out of the studio. Alice has an extra bounce in her step. Rayjean takes another look at the break dance poster where the girl is spinning on her head.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Come on girl, let's get some new dancin' shoes.

INT. BLAINE SR. HIGH GYM - DAY

Students run around the gym floor as Karis blows her whistle. BILLY "THE KID" PAYNE, 30+ white male watches her behind the bleachers.

KARIS

Ok guys, hit the showers

Billy waits until the students clear, and walks silently behind Karis.

BILLY

2 bits, 4 bits, 6 bits, a dollar.

Karis wheels around to see Billy.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Just like ole times Karis.

KARIS

Billy! You scared the crap out of me.

BILLY

Come on girl, just playing with you. How ya doin'?

KARIS

Just getting my sea legs.

BILLY

Your legs look fine to me.

Karis rolls her eyes. Billy looks her up and down.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I guess you heard - I'm the head football coach now?

KARIS

That's the word on the street.

BILLY
 Still building the team and lookin'
 for that QB like Billy The Kid.

Billy draws his hands like pistols and pretends to fire off.

KARIS
 Well, good luck with all that.
 Listen Billy, I've got another
 class coming in.

BILLY
 Sure thing Special K, I'll catch
 you later .

She turns her back and walks away. Billy watches her. He
 blows the smoke away from his fake pistols.

BILLY (CONT'D)
 (Speaking softly)
 Still got a mighty fine ass, mmm.

Karis turns back to see Billy leering and picks up the pace.

INT. BLAINE HIGH SCHOOL - LATE AFTERNOON

Desmond and Karis walk to the show choir room. They observe
 Randy Sanders working with students on a show. It looks
 ragged.

RANDY
 Alright, not bad. A little rough
 moving from one number to the next.
 (He looks over to see
 Desmond and Karis)
 We have some visitors. Take a short
 break, but don't run off.

Randy walks over to the visitors.

KARIS
 Randy, this is my husband, Desmond.

RANDY
 Nice to meet you. Karis said you
 guys might be able to help me with
 the show choir.

DESMOND
 Sure. Tell us what you are doing.

RANDY

We're doing a tribute to show tunes, "Damn Yankees," "Singing in the Rain," and a more contemporary song from "Hairspray" or "Footloose."

DESMOND

Sounds good.

RANDY

Anyway, choreography is not my forte', and my kids aren't dancers, so the transitions are sloppy.

DESMOND

Fair play, let's see a run through and I'll give you some help.

Randy yells for the kids attention.

RANDY

Alright guys, this is Desmond and Karis Howard. They are directors and are goin' to lend a hand today. Let's show them what we've got.

Randy starts the CD.

MONTAGE - Karis and Desmond watching the performers sing and dance. They interject during the numbers to demonstrate better movement and choreography, helping to solve those tricky transitions. Randy's encouraged, kids smile. Karis and Desmond enjoy themselves.

Rehearsal ends, kids leave, shaking hands, high fives. One kid, JACOB LEE hangs around after rehearsal.

JACOB

Thanks for your help today.

DESMOND

Jacob, you caught on to the steps quickly.

JACOB

I do ok with the little dance training I've had, but I need a lot more if I'm going to make it on Broadway.

RANDY

Yes, Jacob has very lofty goals and a lot of determination.

DESMOND

Jacob, we would like you to be a leader at our studio?

JACOB

Wow, that would be great.

KARIS

We can give you the dance and performing skills to help you on your journey to the Big Apple.

DESMOND

Jacob, we'll let you know about training and rehearsals.

Jacob vigorously shakes hands with Karis and Desmond, then bounces out of the room.

RANDY

You got yourself a real firecracker there. That kid will work his butt off to improve.

DESMOND

We need to find 25 more like him.

RANDY

25 may be tough, but you may find some at our talent show.

DESMOND

Talent show?

RANDY

Yes, next Friday. In fact, we need more judges for the show.

KARIS

Sign us up.

DESMOND

Who are the other judges?

RANDY

Let's see, I've got Ed Berkely, he runs a local dinner theatre, the mayor's wife, Jackie Jones and of course Lucy Dunn.

KARIS

Lucy, huh.

RANDY
Is that ok?

DESMOND
Yeah, it's perfect, actually.
Thanks Randy.

INT. BARN/STUDIO - DAY

Sara and John walks into the studio. Desmond works on the sound system.

SARA
Looks like things are coming along.

JOHN
Yeah, looks a lot different.

DESMOND
We are getting close. We hope to start in a week.

SARA
That's wonderful news.

JOHN
Sara, I'm going to town for a haircut.

DESMOND
I could use a trim.

JOHN
Well...

SARA
John, you can take Desmond with you and he can meet the guys.

JOHN
I guess.

DESMOND
Thanks.

INT. JOHN'S TRUCK - DAY

John and Desmond arrive at the TOWNLY Barber Shop.

JOHN
Desmond, I don't know how else to say it, so I'll just say it.
(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

These boys in the shop can be a little rough around the edges. They don't get many, well, actually any Black guys in for haircuts.

DESMOND

I thought as much. Guess I will darken the room a bit, and lighten their heart.

JOHN

You may have to settle for darkening the room.

INT. BARBER SHOP - CONTINUOUS

JOHN

Bill, fellas.

The shop is silent, a few nods and stares. BILL TOWNLY, 50 year old barber, shakes out a cape.

BILL

Who's with ya John?

JOHN

This is Karis' husband, Desmond.

BILL

Well step right up.

JOHN

Desmond, you go ahead.

DESMOND

Mr. Townly, I'm Desmond Howard.

Bill fumbles to give Desmond the 'Black handshake,' while Desmond is trying to give him a regular handshake.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

A regular shake is ok, mate.

JOHN

(Chuckles)

Damn Bill, forget how to shake hands?

BILL

Sorry about that, I haven't had a lot of African Americans in here.

Desmond sits down as Bill throws the drape over him.

DESMOND

Well, your streak is intact,
because I am neither African or
American.

BILL

Shit, I can't keep straight what
you guys want to be called.

DESMOND

Just Desmond for now.

CUT TO:

Bill finishes and pulls the drape off of Desmond.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

Not bad for a white guy.

BILL

Well, I tried.

Desmond hands him cash.

DESMOND

It's good. Keep the change

BILL

Thanks.

DESMOND

(looks at John)

I'm headed to the hardware store.
Cheerio fellas.

Desmond walks out of the barbershop. John sits in the barber
chair.

BILL

That was interesting.

JOHN

Is it my turn now?

BILL

Seems like a nice boy. Not like
your usual Black.

JOHN

He's not a boy, and how about we
eliminate any conversation.

INT. BLAINE HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Patrons settle in their seats for the talent show. Kids backstage getting prepared. Desmond stops by the sound booth on the way into the auditorium.

DESMOND
I'm goin' to check out their
system, you go ahead.

KARIS
Ok, but don't be long.

Karis sit in front with the other judges, including Lucy.

INT. SOUND BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Desmond walks into the sound booth. There's a redheaded kid, CHARLIE, working the board.

DESMOND
How's it going?

CHARLIE
Everything is under control.

DESMOND
Pardon my interruption, I'm Desmond
and I'm a freak for the techy
stuff.

CHARLIE
Cool, I'll show you what I've got.

MONTAGE - Charlie shows Desmond the sound and light board, while the audience files in, the performers get ready.

Karis looks around for Desmond. Desmond finally walks down to his seat as Randy takes center stage.

KARIS
Took you long enough.

DESMOND
It was worth it. I got us a techy
for the studio.

RANDY
(Announcer's voice)
Welcome ladies and gentleman to
J.T. Blaine High School Talent
Show.

Audience applause and some whoops.

RANDY (CONT'D)
We have a lot a great acts for you
tonight. Are you guys excited?

Applause and whistles.

RANDY (CONT'D)
Well, let's get this show kicked
off Texas style with Jamie Flores.

MONTAGE - JAIME, 15 year old Hispanic boy performs a rendition of the country song, "Abilene." You see Desmond nodding his approval to Karis. More acts perform including songs, dance, twirling, and rodeo rope tricks.

MONTAGE CONTINUED - Three performers stand out in the show:

Jacob - performs a song and dance from Footloose, 'I Can't Stand Still.'

CUT TO:

DESMOND
(Turning to Karis)
There is our guy.

KARIS
He's got good stage presence, but
needs more voice work.

CUT TO:

NATE JONES - 17 year old black football player. Nate sings and dances to "Billie Jean." His popularity as a star football player and the dynamic song brings the loudest applause.

CUT TO:

DESMOND
He's got the attitude.

KARIS
That can be good and bad.

CUT TO:

CALLIE BELLOWS - 17 year old white cheerleader. Callie performs a high-energy jazz/hip-hop number.

Her popularity as a cheerleader combined with her talented dance provides a thunderous cheer from the crowd.

CUT TO:

KARIS (CONT'D)

We need her. She's head cheerleader and can pull in more kids.

CUT TO:

All performers on stage for bows. Randy walks over to the judges. The judges confer in their seats. Lucy ignores the other judges. Lucy grabs the other judge's cards, writes something down and gives it to Randy, who takes center stage.

RANDY

Alright ladies and gentlemen. Let's give all these acts a great round of applause.

(Applause)

The judges had a hard time, but they have chosen our first, second and third place finishers. In 3rd place, give it up to a great guy and wonderful performer - Jacob Lee.

Jacob accepts a trophy and handshake.

RANDY (CONT'D)

Ok, in second place, but number one in our hearts, Blaine's head cheerleader, Callie Bellows.

Applause. Callie angrily strides forward to accept her trophy.

RANDY (CONT'D)

And the big winner tonight, drumroll please, is our football star - Nate Jones.

Applause. Nate walks out with his hands raised, nodding to the crowd.

RANDY (CONT'D)

And Nate, besides the trophy, There's a free dinner at Ed's Dinner Theatre, and Desmond and Karis Howard offer a free scholarship at his studio.

LUCY

Shit.

Lucy's jaw tightens, she gets up from her seat, and catches up with Billy in the back of the theatre.

RANDY

Thanks again for attending our talent show and supporting our school.

INT. BACK OF THE THEATRE - CONTINUOUS

LUCY

That sneaky Son of a Bitch, making me look bad in front of the whole school. I didn't build my business by giving away tuition and I'm not goin' to start now.

BILLY

He don't look British, if you know what I mean.

LUCY

Billy, I've had enough of this bullshit, take me home.

CUT TO:

The audience files out. Stage parents congratulate their sons and daughters. Desmond and Karis rise from their seats.

DESMOND

Let's go get our kids.

EXT. COUNTY FAIR - NIGHT

Busy fair goers, sight and sounds of rides and carnival barkers fill the air.

Karis and Desmond man a booth at the county fair. Karis and Desmond's booth is moderately decorated with some movie and musical posters. No business around their booth.

Lucy's booth sits across from the Howards, with plenty of business at her booth. Lucy's booth is all dolled up.

Desmond starts a karaoke machine.

DESMOND

Karis, watch and learn.

KARIS

This should be interesting.

Desmond serenades female passerby's with "You've Lost that Loving Feeling." Some women seem embarrassed, some offended, and some flattered by the attention. Across the way, Lucy is watching Desmond.

LUCY

This has disaster written all over it.

As the song ends, Desmond walks back to the booth and a small crowd begins forms.

DESMOND

Must be my animal magnetism.

KARIS

Oh brother.

EXT. COUNTY FAIR - NIGHT

Loud dance music blares from the main stage. Desmond and Karis walk over to get a better look.

Lucy's dance team performs a cheesy competition dance. Desmond and Karis look at each other and roll their eyes.

KARIS

Want to get a corn dog?

DESMOND

Wasn't that corny enough for you?

KARIS

Yes, but you deserve a good old fashion Texas fair corn dog.

DESMOND

Who can argue with that.

CUT TO:

They finish their corn dogs. A dancer, MOLLY - 17 year old white girl, shyly taps on Desmond's shoulder.

MOLLY

Excuse me.

DESMOND

Hey, you were one of the dancers on stage.

MOLLY
Yes, I'm Molly.

DESMOND
I'm Desmond Howard and this is my
wife, Karis.

MOLLY
I saw you at my studio.

DESMOND
Oh yes, a very brief performance.

MOLLY
I thought it was awesome.

DESMOND
Well, thanks.

MOLLY
I'm interested in taking hip-hop.

KARIS
That's great.

MOLLY
Yeah, but it's a little sticky.

DESMOND
Because you dance at Lucy's?

MOLLY
Well, she's also my aunt.

KARIS
Are you Emily Dunn's girl?

MOLLY
You know my mom?

KARIS
She was older, but I knew her from
dance and cheerleading.

MOLLY
She doesn't talk about that much.

KARIS
Lucy is a good dancer, but your mom
was even better.

MOLLY
Really?

DESMOND

From what I saw tonight, you are a great dancer in your own right.

MOLLY

Thanks.

DESMOND

Training and rehearsals start Monday night at 7.

MOLLY

At the Caufield place?

KARIS

I guess you know where it is.

MOLLY

Yeah.

DESMOND

OK, see you Molly.

Molly walks away. Karis looks dumbfounded and Desmond has a wry grin on his face.

KARIS

That should set off a civil war.

DESMOND

Are we the North or South?

KARIS

In this case, I think we're the "damned Yankees."

DESMOND

They won, right.

Karis nods yes.

CUT TO:

Lucy's booth. She sees Molly walking away from Desmond and Karis. Her eyes narrow.

CUT TO:

Stage. JERRA LANG, a tough looking 17 year old blonde who looks like a rocker. Desmond and Karis watch her perform. She owns the stage, singing "Barracuda."

CUT TO:

DESMOND (CONT'D)
We need that girl.

Desmond grabs a water bottle. He and Karis hustle to Jerra after the performance.

DESMOND (CONT'D)
Miss, I think you earned this.

He hands her the water bottle.

JERRA
Thanks.

DESMOND
You were brilliant.

JERRA
You are definitely not from around here.

DESMOND
We're new in town. I'm Desmond Howard, and this is my wife, Karis.

JERRA
I'm Jerra Lang.

KARIS
You caught our attention.

JERRA
I catch a lot of attention, but not always good.

KARIS
This was good.

DESMOND
Jerra, we're opening a studio in town and think you would be a great fit.

JERRA
What's the catch?

DESMOND
What do you mean?

JERRA
Listen, I got no money.

KARIS

That's not an issue right now.
We're just getting started and need
talented performers.

JERRA

So it's free?

DESMOND

Yes.

JERRA

Cool, as long as you don't get a
bunch of those lame ass dance
chicks that just performed.

DESMOND

(Looks at Karis)

We're trying to get all types of
talent.

JERRA

Ok, I'll check it out.

Karis and Jerra exchange information, as carnival barkers
call out in the background.

KARIS

She's got attitude.

DESMOND

I dig it.

KARIS

And a helluva voice. I can work
with that.

DESMOND

Let's pack up our booth before they
start playing "Deliverance."

INT. MI CASA MEXICAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

John, Sara, Karis, Haley and Desmond walk into the MI CASA
Mexican Restaurant. All eyes turn to the group. Sara meets
the stares and nods her head to some of the regulars. They
sit at a table in the middle of the restaurant.

SARA

This is an excellent Mexican
restaurant.

KARIS

Oh I have missed good Mexican food.

DESMOND

Hey, what about PEPE'S in Chicago,
that was good food.

KARIS

Just wait till you wrap your lips
around some real Tex-Mex.

The waiter, JOSE - 18 year old hispanic man, arrives with chips and salsa and water to drink. He gives Haley a crayon and coloring menu.

WAITER

(Mexican accent)

Buenos Noches, I am Jose and I will
be your waiter. I will let you take
a few moments to look over menu. I
let the Senorita color a picture
for you, Si.

DESMOND

Gracious Senor Jose! Haley, color a
picture for Jose.

HALEY

I'm too old for that.

SARA

Nonsense. Grandpa will help you.

John's preoccupied with the stares in the room.

JOHN

What's that?

SARA

You are goin' to help Haley draw a
picture.

JOHN

OK.

Sara order me the chicken enchilada, I need to see a man
about a horse. He leaves for the restroom.

SARA

John, that's barbershop talk, I
don't want to hear that mess.

DESMOND
What horse?

CUT TO:

The group finishes their meal. Jose and a manager approach the table with a little sombrero and place it on Haley, she giggles.

JOSE
We have a song for Haley.

The manager and Jose perform and version of "La Bamba." Desmond and Karis look at each other and wink after the song. Jose drops off the check. John grabs the check.

JOHN
This one's on me.

KARIS
Thanks Daddy.

DESMOND
Thanks Mr. Caufield.

Jose picks up the check and money.

JOSE
I'll be back with your change.

JOHN
You can keep it.

JOSE
Gracious Senor.

Jose walks away.

DESMOND
(To Karis)
I'm asking him about joining the studio.

Karis nods and Desmond leaves the table.

JOHN
Where's he goin'?

HALEY
Maybe he's going to check on his horse.

Everyone laughs.

INT. BACK OF THE RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Desmond walks to the back of the restaurant and motions to Jose. Jose walks over to him.

JOSE
Something wrong Senor?

DESMOND
No, your singing was brilliant.

JOSE
Thanks.

DESMOND
My wife and I run a studio.

JOSE
(looks confused)
Studio? Sir?

DESMOND
You know singing and dancing, and
we would like you to join our
group.

JOSE
That is very kind, but I must work
and cannot pay.

DESMOND
Listen Jose, you have a wonderful
voice. It won't cost you anything.

JOSE
I'll talk to my Uncle Angel, he
owns the restaurant.

DESMOND
Let's talk to him now.

Jose walks over to UNCLE ANGEL, 40+ hispanic man, and
whispers. Angel walks over to Desmond.

UNCLE ANGEL
Senor, can I help you?

DESMOND
I think I can help Jose.

UNCLE Angel motions for Jose to walk away.

UNCLE ANGEL
How can you help you?

DESMOND

Jose' is a wonderful singer and I'd like him to be part of our studio.

UNCLE ANGEL

What is the pay?

DESMOND

Sir, There's no pay, but...

UNCLE ANGEL

...We have no use for work without money.

Angel tries to turn away.

DESMOND

What if I brought in 8 people to your restaurant once a week, would that make up for him missing a night of work?

UNCLE ANGEL

(Taps his chin)

I don't know.

DESMOND

I will run an advertisement of your restaurant in our show program.

UNCLE ANGEL

How many people will come to this show?

DESMOND

500 people.

UNCLE ANGEL

...Ok, you have a deal.

Shaking hands, they both walk away.

INT. CAUFIELD HOUSE - MORNING

Karis walks into the house to get Haley. John's in the kitchen reading the paper and drinking coffee. He points upstairs when he sees Karis. Karis heads upstairs.

INT. CAUFIELD BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Karis sees Sara with a brush in the bathroom. Haley sits on the sink counter with her hair a mess.

SARA
Don't come in here Karis.

KARIS
Oh Lord.

SARA
I just wanted to fix her hair.

KARIS
Mom, I appreciate that, but her hair is not like white people's hair.

SARA
Well, I know that now!

HALEY
(Points at her hair)
Poof.

KARIS
(Laughs)
Alright, it's time for a professional!

INT. - BELLE'S BEAUTY SHOP - DAY

Belle's beauty shop sits on the other side of the tracks in Harmony. It's a robust place. All heads turn as Sara and Karis walk in with Haley. BELLE, 35+ Black woman and shop owner greets them.

BELLE
Ma'am, may I help you?

SARA
I screwed up my granddaughter's hair.

BELLE
I hear you girl.

KARIS
Can you help my daughter?

BELLE
Sure we can. What's your name, girl?

HALEY
Haley.

BELLE
And how old are you?

HALEY
I'm 10 years old.

BELLE
Ma'am, you have come to the right
place. Tisha, can hook you up.
Let's get you up in the chair

Belle lifts Haley up into a chair. TISHA, 30+ black woman
walks up to look at Haley's hair. Sara and Karis gather
around the chair with Belle and Tisha.

SARA
My name is Sara Caufield.

KARIS
And I'm Karis Howard.

BELLE
I'm Belle and this is my shop. We
got the best working on Haley.

TISHA
You know that's right!

SARA
Can you show me how to fix her
hair?

BELLE
Tisha will get you fixed up Ms.
Sara. She is good at working with
mixed hair.

MONTAGE - Tisha shows Sara how to fix Haley's hair. She takes
them back to the washroom to wash her hair and is talking to
her. The shop patrons are coming by to look and talk and
tease with Haley.

CUT TO:

Tisha's chair.

SARA
This is fun. You girls have more
fun than my beauty shop. Can you do
white people's hair?

TISHA
Honey, if we can do black hair, we
can do white.

SARA

Can you... make mine a little ethnic?

TISHA

Girl, we can take you all the way back to Africa if you want.

Sara smiles. Tisha nods for another stylist. Stylist takes a Sara back to the wash area. Karis sits down and watches Tisha work on Haley. Belle turns up the music.

BELLE

Danitha, get over here girl and help me sing.

Aretha Franklin's song, 'Respect' starts up. Belle hands DANITHA, 17 year old black woman, a brush for the microphone, as Belle and two other ladies assume the backup positions.

Danitha belts the song. Karis stands up watching Danitha. As the song ends, Belle, Danitha and the other singers start laughing, then Danitha walks back to the back.

BELLE (CONT'D)

That's an "oldie but goodie."

Karis walks up to Belle.

KARIS

Belle, who's that girl?

BELLE

That's my daughter, Danitha.

KARIS

What a voice.

BELLE

Yeah, she can bring it.

KARIS

Belle, my husband have just opened a performing studio and would love Danitha to be part of it.

BELLE

Karis, truth is I'd love that, but she is shy about performing outside the shop and church.

KARIS

Does she get anxious?

BELLE
Yeah, that's it.

KARIS
I had the same problem. Maybe I
could work with her on that.

BELLE
I don't know.

KARIS
She has a gift from God and I'd
hate for her to waste it.

BELLE
You're right about that.

KARIS
We could take it slow, no pressure.

BELLE
I'll talk it over with her and we
will see.

KARIS
Ok.

Haley walks up with her hair looking like Beonce. Sara behind
her with her some of her hair in cornrows.

SARA
Ms. Belle, thanks so much. I'll be
back in a month.

BELLE
You take care Ms. Sara.

Tisha walks up to Belle as they watch the two of them leave.

TISHA
Um, Um - don't you know her husband
is gonna freak when he sees Bo
Derik walk through that door?

BELLE
Or maybe get freaky.

They both laugh.

INT. BLAINE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Jacob closes his locker and walks down the hall to class. Two
football players walk toward him. Jacob does not move.

Nate bumps into him hard, throwing him off balance into the lockers.

NATE
Stay the hell out of the way HOMO.

SECOND FOOTBALL PLAYER
(Gives Nate a high five)
This is our damn school, gay wad!

JACOB
(Under his breath)
Didn't know it was dumb ass high.

INT. BLAINE HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - LUNCHTIME

Callie sits with two other CHEERLEADERS. Jerra walks by their table.

FIRST CHEERLEADER
What a freak!

CALLIE
Yeah, give my 3-D glasses cause I'm
watching it in freak-a-rama.

Jerra hears the comment and stops walking. She turns and raises one side of her lip up, like Billy Idol, making a "hissing" noise, and walks off.

INT. BLAINE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER LOUNGE - LUNCHTIME

Karis talks to another teacher while eating a snack. Billy walks up and sits down at her table.

BILLY
Mind if I sit at the pretty girl's
table?

KARIS
(Rolls her eyes)
Not sure which table that is?

BILLY
Right here Special K.

OTHER TEACHER
Special K?

BILLY

That's what I called Karis in high school, when she was the head cheerleader and I was the star quarterback.

OTHER TEACHER

Is that right?

KARIS

Yeah, and it's still demeaning.

BILLY

Come on K. It's a compliment, you know - you are special.

OTHER TEACHER

(Gets up to leave)

Well, got to get ready for class, so I'll just leave you breakfast cereals here to chat.

BILLY

(To Karis)

She kind of sweet.

KARIS

Yeah, you can call her Sugar Smacks.

BILLY

(Laughs)

That's a good one K, Sugar Smacks.

INT. BARN/STUDIO - EVENING

Desmond and Karis wait inside the studio for the kids to arrive. Jacob arrives first. He begins immediately having Desmond and Karis show him some dance moves.

Later, Charlie arrives. Desmond starts him on the computer, controlling the lights and sound.

Jose walks in and shakes hands with Desmond.

Rayjean walks in with her tights on, but immediately goes in the bathroom to change into distressed jeans, a flannel shirt and ball cap. She is looking at the posters on break dancing, Desmond approaches her and starts showing her a few moves.

Danitha and Belle come in. Danitha stays in the back and appears timid and shy.

KARIS

Danitha and Belle, so nice of you to come.

BELLE

I thought I'd better come to check it out.

KARIS

You are welcome anytime. Danitha, we've been talking about you singing "Amazing Grace."

DANITHA

I don't know.

KARIS

We'll see. Danitha, why don't you go over there and start stretching.

Danitha walks over and sits down next to Jose.

Molly arrives and begins stretching out on the floor.

Jerra walks in looking all punked out.

Nate and Callie come in together.

NATE

WOOF, WOOF, WOOF, big dog in the house!

Nate and Callie look around and take inventory of the students. Callie spots Jerra.

CALLIE

Oh, hell no, not the freak.

JERRA

(Gives the lip sneer)
What's up RA RA?

NATE

(Spots Jacob)
I guess homos are part of this gig.

JACOB

Hey, I'm not the guy in the locker room smacking everybody on the ass.

Nate grabs Jacob by the collar. Desmond puts his hand on Nate's shoulder and Nate releases Jacob.

KARIS

That's enough! Everybody sit down
on the floor and be quiet.

The kids sit down on the floor and quiet down. Desmond walks
around the group, making eye contact.

DESMOND

You are all here for a reason.

NATE

(Laughing)
Hope it ain't Special Ed.

DESMOND

(Glares at Nate)
Together, we can do something
special, but you'll have to develop
some trust in us and in each other.

KARIS

Most of you have been part of some
type of group and know that it
takes teamwork to get it done.

DESMOND

The key is making the whole bigger
than the parts. I have a vision to
set this town on its ear with a
huge performance.

CALLIE

With this group?

DESMOND

Yeah, this group. You are capable
of doing incredible things.

KARIS

Enough talk, let's get this party
started. Charlie hit the music and
let's get warmed up.

Charlie starts an upbeat hip-hop/pop tune and Desmond begins
taking them through the paces of some warm-up dance moves.
The mood begins to loosen a bit after the dance warm-up.

DESMOND

Alright, great start. Karis take
Danitha back to the vocal studio
while I teach the rest of you a
short routine.

INT. SMALL STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Karis and Danitha sit down on stools.

KARIS

Danitha, you have a wonderful voice.

DANITHA

Thank you Ma'am.

KARIS

Call me Karis, please.

DANITHA

Yes Ma'am, I mean Karis

KARIS

Honey, your voice is a gift from God.

DANITHA

Thank you.

KARIS

I can help you some with your voice, but mainly I want to help you reduce your anxiety.

DANITHA

Yeah, that would be good.

KARIS

I know how it feels, because I've dealt with it.

DANITHA

Really?

KARIS

We will work through it together.

MONTAGE -

- Dance routines with kids, led by Desmond.
- Karis and Danitha in the vocal studio singing.
- Charlie working on lights and sound.

CUT TO:

All the kids come back to the main dance room at the end of rehearsal. They look spent, quiet, but in a better mood.

DESMOND

That's a rap tonight. We're going to practice again on Wednesday.

NATE

(Talking to Callie)

Man, I'm whooped. He worked us harder than football.

CALLIE

Yeah, it was tough.

JERRA

(Walking out the door)

Wusies.

Molly and Rayjean walk out the door, yell, "Bye." Callie and Nate walk out the door together. Belle walks over to Karis.

BELLE

I thought you were goin' to have a fight, but you did a good job of putting a lid on that pot.

KARIS

It's just like any group, we will have some growing pains.

BELLE

No need for me to come back, but Danitha will see you on Wednesday.

KARIS

Y'all have a good night.

Danitha and her Mom walk out of the studio. Everyone leaves without incident. Jacob hangs around.

JACOB

I brought my tap shoes. Can you show me some combinations?

DESMOND

I'm beat, but we can work on it for 20 minutes.

Desmond teaches Jacob some tap combinations, while Karis takes Haley up to bed. When Jacob leaves, Desmond falls in the middle of the dance floor exhausted. Karis walks in.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

(Rolling on his side)

I'm getting old.

KARIS
 (Sits on the floor)
 How do you think it went, old man?

DESMOND
 They don't trust us and they
 certainly don't trust each other.

KARIS
 That's to be expected. I thought
 they worked hard.

DESMOND
 Especially Jacob, but right now
 he's not as talented as Nate.

KARIS
 Danitha and Jerra can really belt
 it and the other girls are good
 dancers.

DESMOND
 I think we can make something
 happen in this town?

KARIS
 Let's just try to start a business.

DESMOND
 Yeah, but we can do more than that.

KARIS
 We'll see.

INT. BLAINE HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Callie and her cheerleading friends are sitting at a table.
 Jerra walks by her table.

JERRA
 What's up RA RA?

CHEERLEADER 1
 Did she like just say something to
 you?

CALLIE
 No, I don't think so. She's just
 weird.

Nate and his football friends sitting at a table and Jacob
 walks by the table.

NATE
Hey MO!

JACOB
Hey HO.

NATE
What?

JACOB
Get it, HO - MO.

NATE
I'm goin' to take you apart.

Nate starts to get up, but the other player restrains him.

FOOTBALL PLAYER 1
He's not worth suspension.
Remember, team first.

Nate and Jacob stare at each other for a moment. Jacob turns and walks away.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - AFTER SCHOOL

Lucy leads the cheerleaders in a choreographed number. Lucy sees Billy is talking to Karis on the other side of the gym. Billy watches Karis walking away and he makes the "guns firing motion." Lucy is livid.

LUCY
That sucks! Take five.

Lucy walks over to Billy, but stops when she hears Callie and Molly talking about a rehearsal.

CALLIE
Molly, you want to show them some
of that number from last night?

MOLLY
Why not?

They take a position, then drop forward into a series of precise movements, like Janet Jackson's Rhythm Nation dance. After a few seconds, they see Lucy looking at them intensely. They stop immediately.

LUCY

Ok, let's get started again.
Callie, drop out for a minute and
come over here. Molly, take her
spot and let's get started.

Molly looks a bit confused, but the music starts and all the
girls begin dancing.

CALLIE

Ms. Dunn, I really need to get back
in that dance.

LUCY

Let's just take a little walk.

They walk into the hallway.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Looks like you've joined Desmond
and Karis group.

CALLIE

So, I'm not part of your studio.

LUCY

Yeah. You know you could be a
better dancer than Molly if you
just came to my technique classes.

CALLIE

That's boring.

LUCY

Doesn't he work on technique?

CALLIE

I guess, but it's not boring.

LUCY

I'd like to hear some more about
what they are doing over there
Callie.

CALLIE

Go ask them yourself. Ms. Dunn, I
really need to get back to the
routine.

LUCY

About that, I think Molly is the
best one to lead this number.

(MORE)

LUCY (CONT'D)

However, I might be convinced otherwise if you will tell me about the studio.

CALLIE

You can kiss my ass!

Callie walks back into the gym. Lucy gives a wry smile.

INT. LUCY'S DANCE STUDIO - EVENING

Girls perform a routine on the dance floor. Lucy watches closely, paying special attention to Molly.

LUCY

Molly, come over here for a minute.

MOLLY

Yes Ma'am?

LUCY

Looks like you're doggin' it. I may take you out of this dance.

MOLLY

Excuse me?

LUCY

Looks like you are too worn out from rehearsing at that Nigger's studio.

Molly's silent, but blushes.

LUCY (CONT'D)

What are you doing over there, hip - hop?

MOLLY

Yes Ma'am.

LUCY

You know I don't mind you and Emily staying at my house until you get a place of your own.

MOLLY

Yes Ma'am.

LUCY

I want you to stay as long as you need to. But you need to let me know what you're doin' over there.

MOLLY

You want me to spy?

LUCY

No honey, I just want to know what the competition's up to, that's all. No big deal, just a little report. What's that among family?

Molly reluctantly nods her head in the affirmative.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Alright, get back in your spot in that dance, and run it again!

INT. DESMOND'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Desmond works with Rayjean on some break dance moves, while Karis works with Danitha on movement with a song.

The rest of the group comes in, stretching out and mingling. Nate keeps an intense eye on Jacob. Jerra gives Callie the "lip."

DESMOND

Ok, let's get started. Everyone take your position to rehearse "Amazing Grace."

Danitha and Jerra take center stage, the others sluggishly gather around her.

The music starts, Danitha begins singing, while the girls circle around her in a lyrical dance. The boys come out and start partnering with the girls. After 30 seconds, Desmond walks forward.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

Clearly you guys are not with it tonight.

Desmond paces around the group.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

I want Callie, Jerra, Nate and Jacob to come with me.

They follow Desmond to the back.

KARIS

Alright, Danitha let's go again. Places everyone.

INT. SMALL STUDIOS - CONTINUOUS

DESMOND

Jerra and Callie, you are in this room. You've got 20 minutes to teach each other some type of performance.

CALLIE

Do what?

DESMOND

20 minutes, so I suggest you get started. Guys, you are in the other room and 20 minutes to do the same thing.

NATE

This is whack!

Desmond turns and walks back to the main studio.

INT. SMALL STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

NATE

What the hell is this about?

JACOB

Probably about how well we get along.

Nate leans in and pushes him into the wall.

NATE

We ain't goin' to be friends, Fag.

Jacob pushes Nate back.

JACOB

Keep your hands off of me,
Neanderthal.

NATE

What you call me?

JACOB

Grab a dictionary and look it up.

INT. OTHER SMALL STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

CALLIE

Let's get this over, Freak.

JERRA
Freak, huh. From the girl who
dresses in a RA RA suit?

CALLIE
It's called cheerleading.

JERRA
Or selling out.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE -

- "Amazing Grace" rehearsal.
- Callie and Jerra arguing.
- Nate and Jacob arguing.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

NATE
What your little punk white ass
gonna teach me?

JACOB
Actually, a little number that
Usher did a couple of years ago.

INT. OTHER SMALL STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

CALLIE
Speaking of RA RA, how about a
little cheer?

INT. SMALL STUDIO

NATE
Ok Jacob, now let me show you how
Usher really does it and see if you
can hang.

Nate starts an Usher hip-hop song.

INT. OTHER SMALL STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

JERRA

RA RA, your turn to rock it out.

Desmond knocks on the small studio doors.

DESMOND

Come out, come out where ever you are.

They follow him back to the main studio.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentleman, we have a special performance tonight. Guys, show us what you have.

Nate steps center, puts on a fedora hat. "Singing in the Rain" music starts. Nate lip-syncs with the jazz dance steps. He stops after 30 seconds of the song. Everyone applauds and shouts encouragement. Nate passes the hat to Jacob.

NATE

Yeah, Big-Dog can do it all baby. You'd better not embarrass me.

DESMOND

Ok, Jacob let's see what Nate taught you.

Jacob steps center and puts on the hat. "Caught Up" by USHER begins. Jacob does the dance to 30 seconds of the song, including some popping moves. Everyone applauds wildly.

JACOB

(Flicks the hat to Nate)
Not bad for a white boy.

NATE

You had a good teacher.

DESMOND

Ladies.

Jerra steps center, bows her head. Starts a cheer number with arm movements as she calls out the words.

Stomping and precise hand/arm movements.

JERRA

We will, we will, rock you. We will, we will rock you.

CALLIE

Buddy you're a boy make a big noise
Playin' in the street gonna be a
big man some day You got mud on yo'
face You big disgrace - Kickin'
your can all over the place.

JERRA AND CALLIE

We will, we will, rock you. We
will, we will rock you.

Everyone joins in the song, then applaud. Callie and Jerra
take a bow.

DESMOND

Let's do "Amazing Grace" one more
time.

They all line up and begin the song and dance. Desmond and
Karis look at each other and smile.

INT. BLAINE HIGH LIBRARY - BEFORE SCHOOL

Jacob sits at a table, looking over some notes. Nate walks in
and heads for a table where some of the popular kids are
seated, but sees Jacob and they nod at each other.

INT. BLAINE SR. HIGH GIRLS BATHROOM - DAY

Callie fixes her makeup. Jerra walks in.

JERRA

Give me a R, give me an A, give me
another R and another A, what's
that spell, RA RA!

CALLIE

What's up with calling me RA RA?

JERRA

Well, it's either that or 2 bits.

CALLIE

Whatever ROCKER CHIC.

INT. BLAINE HIGH GYM - DAY

Karis gathers up gym equipment. Billy sneaks up on her again.

BILLY

How's it goin', K?

KARIS
Billy, quit sneakin' up on me.

BILLY
You use to love that.

KARIS
Not really.

BILLY
Didn't mean nothin', I just wanted
to tell you about the teacher
banquet next month.

Lucy enters the gym and sees Billy talking to Karis.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Every year, the school has a dinner
for the teachers, kinda of a year-
end thing.

Lucy walks up to them.

LUCY
Hey KID, what's goin' on?

BILLY
Nothin', just ran into Karis.

KARIS
Billy was just telling me about the
teacher banquet next month.

BILLY
Yeah, just letting all the teachers
know about the banquet is all.

LUCY
Well that's nice KID, why don't you
run on and tell the other teachers.

BILLY
Ok Babe, I'll catch up with you
later.

Billy leaves.

LUCY
Karis, this ain't high school
anymore.

KARIS
 (Looking around)
 Funny, I thought that was exactly
 what it was.

LUCY
 Stay away for Billy.

KARIS
 Tell your boyfriend to stay away
 from me.

Karis leaves the gym, while Lucy watches her.

INT. LUCY'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Lucy sees Molly enter the studio.

LUCY
 Molly, I need to see you in my
 office.

Molly follows Lucy into her office.

LUCY (CONT'D)
 No time to beat around the bush,
 what's goin' on at the Howard's
 studio?

MOLLY
 Well, I don't know what to tell
 you.

LUCY
 Need I remind we're family?

MOLLY
 We're just rehearsing and training.

LUCY
 What kind of training?

MOLLY
 All of its just kind of mashed into
 - technique, hip- hop, jazz,
 singing, you know.

LUCY
 Are your rehearsing for something?

MOLLY
 A show.

LUCY
When is it?

MOLLY
It's at Grayson Theatre in 4 weeks,
on May 1.

LUCY
Is it good?

MOLLY
Yes Ma'am.

LUCY
As good as our shows?

MOLLY
Better.

LUCY
Well see about that. That's all for
now.

Molly leaves. Lucy picks up the phone. KYLE, Theatre
Administrator answers the phone.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Kyle, I need you to do me a favor
about a date at your theatre.

INT. MI CASA MEXICAN RESTAURANT

The Howard's studio group finishes eating.

UNCLE ANGEL
Everything was good, senor?

DESMOND
Incredible.

UNCLE ANGEL
Gracious senor.

Angel walks away. Desmond gets up and follows Angel.

DESMOND
Angel, I wanted Jose' to sing for
the patrons?

UNCLE ANGEL
We're not prepared.

DESMOND

Just give me five minutes with your band and we can be ready.

UNCLE ANGEL

Ok, just let me know when you are ready.

Desmond goes over to the band and talks with them and then heads back to the group.

DESMOND

Ok guys, it's show time. We need to work for our dinner.

NATE

I ain't doin no dishes.

DESMOND

Jose', We're doing "She Bangs" with the band.

JOSE

I don't know.

DESMOND

You are doing it. Everyone else does the Latin dance and if you don't have a partner, then find one in the restaurant. Angel, We're ready.

The kids get in position. Patrons look around.

UNCLE ANGEL

Senors and Senioritas, we have a special performance lead by my nephew, Jose. Let's give them some applause.

The band gives a short intro to the song and the dancers find a spot to partner. Jose begins singing, and the dancers partner in a salsa dance. The patrons start to clap to the beat.

Jose puts in more personality, banging his hip with Karis. Desmond picks a lady to get up and dance with him.

The dancers pick patrons to dance with as well. The song finishes with Jose standing in a chair. The restaurant erupts in applause and whoops. The group takes a bow.

UNCLE ANGEL (CONT'D)
Desmond that was great! Can you
something like that every week?

DESMOND
Sure we can Angel.

Angel shakes hands with all the performers. Patrons pat them
on the back. Jose shakes hands with the band members.

EXT. CAUFIELD HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Sara and Haley look at the sky from their porch. The sky's
painted green and black, with the wind picking up. Haley
looks around.

HALEY
The sky looks funny.

SARA
Yeah, that's the color before a
storm.

INT. CAUFIELD HOUSE - LATER

John walks into the kitchen. Sara pulls out a batch of
cookies. Haley colors at the dining room table. The radio
posts a tornado watch for the area.

JOHN
I'm goin' to check the flashlights
in the cellar.

SARA
Good idea, I'll go talk to the
Karis.

HALEY
Can I go with you Grandpa?

JOHN
Sure thing Baby Doll, I could use
some help.

John and Haley walk out of the house. Sara follows behind
them, heading to the studio.

EXT. CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

John opens the door and walks down into the cellar and
switches on a flashlight. Haley waits at the top.

JOHN
Come on down Haley.

Haley is cautious, but tentatively starts down the steps.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I need you to test those
flashlights.

HALEY
Ok.

Haley starts clicking the flashlights on and off, beaming the light on the wall. John moves items around in the shelter.

HALEY (CONT'D)
They work Grandpa.

JOHN
Good.

HALEY
Are we goin' to have to stay in
here?

JOHN
Only if the weather gets worse.

HALEY
It smells funny in here.

JOHN
The air is stale because it's below
ground.

HALEY
Why couldn't we just stay in the
house?

JOHN
Hopefully we can. Let's get back to
the house and eat some of Grandma's
cookies.

INT. HOWARD'S STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

The kids rehears a hip-hop song and dance number as Sara enters the studio. Sara walks over to Karis.

SARA
Karis, walk with me outside for a
minute.

Sara and Karis walk out of the studio and get a curious glance from Desmond.

EXT. BARN/STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Sara and Karis look at the ominous sky.

KARIS
When did that come up?

SARA
You're back in Texas. The weather changes in a minute.

KARIS
Looks threatening.

SARA
There's a tornado watch.

KARIS
Is Haley scared?

SARA
Grandpa's keepin' her busy getting the cellar ready.

KARIS
I think we should stop rehearsal.

SARA
That's a good idea.

Sara heads to the house and Karis walks back into the studio.

INT. BARN/STUDIO

Karis walks over to Desmond who watches rehearsal. She motions with her finger to come over. He walks over to Karis.

DESMOND
Everything alright?

KARIS
We've got severe weather, a tornado watch.

DESMOND
Tornado?

KARIS
We should send the kids home.

DESMOND
Let's get them together.

Desmond signals Chucky to cut the music.

NATE
What the...?

CALLIE
...Shut your mouth.

Kids laugh and joke.

KARIS
Guys, take a seat.

The kids sit on the floor as Karis and Desmond stand to address them.

JACOB
What's goin' on?

KARIS
There's a storm coming and y'all should head home.

CALLIE
Storms happen here all the time, so there's no sense in stopping rehearsal.

KARIS
I remember, but there's a tornado watch.

Nate gets up quickly and hurries to the window.

NATE
(Sarcastically)
Ain't no tornado here.

JERRA
Tornado watch don't mean shit around here.

CALLIE
Rocker Chic is right.

KARIS
Well, the safest thing is to go home?

JACOB
We want to rehearse!

All the kids yell in unison, "rehearse, rehearse, ..."

KARIS
Listen...

A tornado siren goes off.

DESMOND
Shit, that can't be good.

KARIS
Guys, follow me to the shelter.

INT. CAUFIELD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The siren goes off. John grabs Haley and Sara follows them out the door to the shelter. Haley's crying and shaking.

HALEY
A tornado!

EXT. TORNADO SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

Kids walk to the shelter, but several talk with Karis or Desmond.

DANITHA
(To Karis)
I need to get home.

KARIS
Honey, it's too late to leave.

JOSE
(Talking to Desmond)
Desmond, I need to check on my Uncle.

DESMOND
Jose, we need to take shelter.

JERRA
(Talking to Karis)
I have to check on my parents.

John, Sara and Haley are waiting at the cellar with the door open. John sees the commotion with the kids and passes Haley to Sara.

JOHN
(Takes charge)
Listen kids!
(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

It's too late to leave; you need to get in the cellar now.

DESMOND

(Softly to John)

Is it that serious?

John nods. The talkative group proceeds to the cellar.

INT. MI CASA MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Angel ushers out customers. He walks to the kitchen.

UNCLE ANGEL

(Barking orders)

Just turn everything off and get home, Vamelos!

Employees hurriedly exit the door as Angel works the register. The lights flicker, as the phone rings. Angel grabs the phone.

UNCLE ANGEL (CONT'D)

Ola Magdalena, Yes I'm ok.

(pauses to listen)

Calmesa, it will be ok.

(pauses)

Just take shelter in the bathroom.

(pauses)

I will leave in a minute. I just need to put the money in the safe and lock up the restaurant. I love you.

EXT. CAUFIELD STORM SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

Kids file into the shelter. Karis holds a crying Haley, who calls out for Sara.

JOHN

(Talking to Sara)

Dammit! There's not enough room.

SARA

We need to head to the house.

DESMOND

(Turns to Sara)

Like bloody hell!

SARA

What?

DESMOND
 (Desmond gently moves Sara
 behind him)
 You stay here and I'll go to the
 house with John!

Karis moves toward Desmond, while Haley grabs onto Sara. Sara turns and winks at John and he winks back. Karis leans up and gives Dez a hug.

KARIS
 I love you.

DESMOND
 I've love you too. Take care of
 Haley and the kids.

JOHN
 We've got to go.

Desmond steps out of the cellar and as Karis looks up, John closes the door.

INT. CAUFIELD STORM SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

The kids find a spot to sit down. Jose sits next to Danitha. Jerra sits next to Jacob.

SARA
 Haley, can you pass out the
 flashlights?

Haley cautiously passes out the flashlights.

JOSE
 (To Danitha)
 I should be at the restaurant with
 Angel.

DANITHA
 I'm sure he's fine.

She grabs Jose's hand and she smiles.

JERRA
 (To Jacob)
 I hope my parents are ok.

JACOB
 I'm sure they are fine.

JERRA
 They're old and need my help.

JACOB
All our parents are old.

JERRA
No, like grandparents old.

JACOB
Well, they've survived a lot of
storms, right?

JERRA
Yes.

The siren stops and everyone looks around.

CHUCKY
Can we get out now?

SARA
No, we have to wait. The siren may
have stopped momentarily. It's a
good time to start a song?

KARIS
Haley, why don't we sing your
favorite song?

Haley looks wary, still on the verge of tears.

RAYJEAN
What song is do you want to sing
Haley?

HALEY
(Timidly sings)
This little light of mine.

Rayjean sings and flashing the light on Haley. Karis and Sara
join in. Soon the whole group sings, shining their lights on
Haley.

CUT TO:

INT. LUCY'S STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

She waves at her students leaving and closes the door. She
looks at her assistant, then out the window.

LUCY
Maybe a tornado will hit Karis'
studio and wipe their asses out.

ASSISTANT
You can't mean that.

LUCY
The hell I don't. The quicker they
get out, one way or another, is
just fine with me.

INT. CAUFIELD TORNADO SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

Everyone stops singing to hear the radio.

RADIO WEATHER ANNOUNCEMENT (V.O.)
There's a tornado on the ground on
the Northside of Harmony at Wills
and Bethel Road, moving east. If
you are in this area, take shelter
now.

DANITHA
That's by my church.

JOSE
Julio's restaurant is there.

Sara stands up to control the group.

SARA
Everyone calm down, We aren't going
anywhere. We're safe. Let's get
back to singin'.

A few kids start singing softly again. The tornado siren
starts up again.

INT. MI CASA MEXICAN RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Angel walks to the window and sees the tornado coming. He
walks into the bathroom and sits on the floor. He pulls out a
picture of his pregnant wife and crosses his chest. The
lights go out and he hears the roar of the tornado.

INT. CAUFIELD HOUSE CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Desmond and John crouch in the closet. They hear the roar of
the tornado.

DESMOND
Will the kids be ok down there?

JOHN
Yeah, they're underground.

Desmond looks scared. John touches Desmond's shoulder.

JOHN (CONT'D)
We'll be too fine, son.

EXT. CAUFIELD STORM SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

Tornado spins close to the property. The shelter door rattles.

GROUP (V.O.)
Singing "This Little Light of
Mine."

The door stops rattling. The weather calms. The singing stops.

EXT. CAUFIELD STORM SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

John and Desmond walk to the shelter. John points to the property.

JOHN
That was close. You can see it
touched the treetops before moving
northeast.

DESMOND
It sounded like it was right on top
of us.

JOHN
Too close for comfort.

John opens the door to the shelter.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Everybody ok down there?

SARA
We're ok, how about ya'll?

Kids start filing out of the shelter.

JOHN
Got a little brown in our shorts,
but other than that.

SARA

Oh hush that talk John and give me
a hug.

Karis and Haley rush to Desmond and Haley jumps in his arms.

HALEY

DADDY!

KARIS

I love you honey.

DESMOND

I love both my girls.
(Hugging them)
So that's a tornado?

KARIS

Welcome to Texas!

Branches lay scattered across the yard and trashcans overturned. No damage to the house or studio. The kids walk out, hugging each other, talking, laughing. Jose walks over to the adults.

JOSE

Desmond can you take me to the
restaurant?

DESMOND

Karis, Jose is very worried about
his uncle.

KARIS

We heard on the radio that the
tornado was right by the
restaurant.

DESMOND

Ok, I'll take him now.

Desmond waves for Jose. Danitha comes with Jose.

DANITHA

I'm coming with you.

DESMOND

All right, let's go.

They head for the car.

JACOB

Jerra, you want me to go with you
to check on your folks?

JERRA

Yeah. I'm sure their ok, I guess I kinda freaked.

JACOB

Well, it was scary.

JERRA

Let's go see the old folks.

Jerra and Jacob head for the car.

INT. DESMOND'S CAR - EVENING

Desmond drives by Bethel Baptist Church, and they see some damage. Jose leans forward. Danitha grabs his hand. They turn another corner and see the restaurant - leveled. There's an EMT moving a cot onto the ambulance. Magdalena stands by.

EXT. MI CASA MEXICAN RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Jose opens his door and runs to the ambulance. Desmond and Danitha get out and walk quickly to the scene. They see Magdalena and Jose embrace as the ambulance door closes. Magdalena walks to her car and Jose sprints back to Desmond.

JOSE

(Talking to Desmond)

I'm taking Magdalena to the hospital.

DESMOND

I'll meet you there.

Jose runs back to the car.

DANITHA

Can we stop quickly at my mom's on the way to let her know I'm ok?

DESMOND

Sure. Let's go.

INT. HARMONY HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Desmond, Danitha and Belle sit down as Karis arrives with the other kids.

KARIS

We heard about Angel on the news.

JOHN
How bad is it?

DESMOND
(Shakes his head, voice
cracks)
He's not going to make it.

KARIS
My Lord.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Magdalena and Angel sits on either side of Angel. Angel barely conscious, his breathing is rapid and shallow. Tubes and monitors coming out of him. Angel leans over to Jose to say something.

UNCLE ANGEL
(Voice in a whisper)
M'ijo. Follow your dream.

JOSE
I will Uncle.

Angel leans his head toward Magdalena and she presses her ear to hear Angel.

UNCLE ANGEL
Name her Angelina.

MAGDALENA
Carazon. Mi Amor. Mi Vida

INT. HARMONY HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jose and Magdalena walk out of his room, holding each other and crying. The group forms a circle around them, hugging and crying with them.

INT. LUCY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lucy and Emily watch TV. Molly can hear the TV. The news announcer shows an image of the leveled restaurant.

LUCY
That's too bad. I liked that
Mexican place.

EMILY
A man was died there tonight.

LUCY
Was he an illegal?

EMILY
What the hell does that matter?

LUCY
Just askin', that's all. I wonder
if this will chase that... Desmond
back home?

EMILY
What do you have against them?

LUCY
Everything.

INT. MOLLY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Molly hears the conversation. She cries and punches her pillows.

EXT. CAUFIELD PORCH - NIGHT

John and Sara sitting in their rocking chairs.

SARA
It got pretty exciting tonight.

JOHN
Yep.

SARA
How did you and Desmond do?

JOHN
He was worried about Karis and the
kids.

SARA
I expect so.

JOHN
I think Karis did ok with him.

SARA
Me too.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

Desmond walks around the studio. Karis walks in the room.

DESMOND
Did I wake you?

KARIS
No, I couldn't sleep.

DESMOND
This is devastating.

KARIS
I know Honey, I feel so bad.

DESMOND
We've got to do something.

KARIS
Yeah. We need to help Magdalena and Jose.

DESMOND
Of course. But it's bigger than that.

KARIS
I know what you mean. Being here at this time.

DESMOND
With these kids.

KARIS
Exactly.

DESMOND
Do something to heal this town.

KARIS
Bring them together.

Haley walks out and wipes her eyes.

HALEY
What are you doing up this late?

KARIS
I could ask you the same thing.

DESMOND
You ok, honey?

HALEY
Yeah.

They all sit on the floor.

KARIS
It was kinda scary today, huh?

DESMOND
But we're ok.

KARIS
You want to talk about it baby?

HALEY
I had a dream.

DESMOND
Was it a nightmare?

HALEY
No...It was beautiful.

DESMOND
Tell us about it honey.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

The group sits on the floor in a somber mood. Karis and Desmond stand in front of the kids.

DESMOND
We've suffered a loss and we're still grieving.

RAYJEAN
Do you think we should still do a show?

KARIS
What do you guys think?

JACOB
I don't know.

CHUCKY
I don't feel too good about it.

JOSE
I think Angel would have wanted us to perform.

DANITHA
How do you know that?

JOSE
He told me to follow my dreams.

MOLLY

When?

JOSE

(His voice cracks)
Right before.

KARIS

It's ok.

DESMOND

Speaking of following your dreams,
Haley had a dream after the tornado
and she wants to tell you about it.

Haley walks over to the group, while Karis holds her hand.

HALEY

After the tornado, I had a dream.
We were all holding hands and
bowing to a crowd.

RAYJEAN

That's sweet.

HALEY

And the crowd was holding hands
too.

DANITHA

What do you think it means?

HALEY

I think it means by doing the show
we can help the town.

JOSE

She is right.

KARIS

Let's get up and do what Haley
said.

Everyone holds hands.

DESMOND

Are we together?

Desmond raises his hands, along with the group.

GROUP

YEAH!

INT. GOODWILL STORE - DAY

The kids meet up to obtain costumes for the show.

KARIS

Everyone knows what we're looking
for, but if you have any questions,
let us know. Start trying stuff on.

MONTAGE -

- The group walk the aisles, placing clothes over their torso to see what it may look like.
- Some go into the dressing rooms and strut their stuff, like on a catwalk.
- Some of the group dance together.
- Patrons watch.
- Soon they all dress in costumes. They begin a hustle dance routine together. Some of the patrons begin dancing with the group. The scene culminates with them high-fiving each other.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - DAY

Jacob and Jerra dance in the garage. Jacob's dad, MIKE - 40+ white man, enters the house in a foul mood. He walks into the kitchen and sees his wife JAMIE - 40+ white woman.

MIKE

Sounds like he's dancing in the
garage again. My son, the chorus
boy.

JAMIE

Just go and say hi.

MIKE

Why?

JAMIE

Tell him that supper will be ready
in 20 minutes.

Mike walks into the garage. He sees Jacob lifting Jerra in the air and then dipping her. Mike smiles.

MIKE

Jacob, introduce me to your lady
friend.

JACOB

Dad, this is Jerra. Jerra, this is
my Dad - Mike.

MIKE

Jerra, pleasure to meet you.

I hope you'll stay for supper. Jerra looks at Jacob, who shrugs his shoulders.

JERRA

That would be great.

MIKE

It's settled.

MOM says supper in 20 minutes. You guys practice hard. MIKE walks back into the house.

JERRA

Your dad seems real excited.

JACOB

(Rolls his eyes)

Let's get back to work.

INT. TEACHER'S BANQUET - NIGHT

Karis and Desmond walk into Meeks Country Club. There's a crowd. They make their way to the banquet area.

DESMOND

Honey, are there any black teachers at your school?

KARIS

Yeah, there are a few.

(Winking)

You stick with me and we will be ok.

DESMOND

All right Love.

KARIS

You sweet-talking Englishman.

They walk into the banquet hall, looking for their table. Karis sees Billy sitting at a table.

KARIS (CONT'D)

Oh sweet Jesus, please don't have us at their table.

BILLY

K, over here.

DESMOND
It's just one night.

Desmond and Karis see their names on a card. Desmond pulls the chair out for Karis.

BILLY
They got me and Luc sitting across from you guys.

DESMOND
Fancy that.

Lucy walks in and sits down. The tension is palpable.

LUCY
How's rehearsal coming?

DESMOND
Swimmingly.

BILLY
You guys swimming in your show?

The tension breaks when the SPEAKER, 40+ white man, takes a mike.

SPEAKER
Good evening ladies and gentleman.
Tonight we celebrate our
profession, the honored profession
of teaching.

KARIS
(Whispering to Desmond)
This may be the longest night of
your life.

INT. BANQUET AREA - NIGHT

Couples on the dance floor. Desmond sits at the table watching. Billy slow dances with Lucy. The music ends. Lucy gestures to Billy and heads out. Billy intercepts Karis as she is returning from the restroom.

BILLY
(Grabs Karis arm)
One dance for 'ole time sake.

KARIS
I don't think so.

Karis keeps walking. Desmond sees the interaction and walks angrily to the dance floor. Karis stops Desmond.

KARIS (CONT'D)

He's not worth it. Let's dance.

Billy walks back to the table watching Desmond and Karis dance. He sits down. Lucy arrives and sits.

LUCY

Miss much?

BILLY

Nope.

The song ends and Desmond kisses Karis hand and gives a bow.

DESMOND

I think it's time to really get this party started.

KARIS

Desmond, don't embarrass me.

DESMOND

Who, me?

Desmond walks over to the DJ. Desmond hands the DJ a CD. They talk for a minute. Desmond heads back to the dance floor as the music begins a retro disco beat with a modern song.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

Karis, follow me.

Desmond starts a line dance - disco hustle with a modern hip-hop flare. A timid Karis joins the dance. The black teachers and their dates join the group first. Soon, the dance floor is full. Billy and Lucy watch from the table.

LUCY

Quite the show-off.

BILLY

He ain't nuthin.

INT. BANQUET AREA - LATER

Everyone leaving. Lucy and Billy rise from the table.

LUCY

Karis, I meant to tell you that I booked the Grayson Theatre for the same night as your show.

KARIS

That's impossible. We booked that over a month ago and there were no conflicts.

LUCY

Well, they made a mistake. You can check with KYLE.

KARIS

You vengeful...

LUCY

...Goodnight y'all.

Desmond and Karis sit at the table stunned.

KARIS

What the hell are we going to do now?

DESMOND

I don't know, but I know we will figure it out.

The DJ comes over to talk with Desmond.

DJ

I wanted to ask you about the music you gave me?

DESMOND

All right.

KARIS

I'll meet you at the car.

DESMOND

I'll be right there.

Desmond engages the DJ in a discussion as Karis walks out of the room.

EXT. MEEKS COUNTY CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Karis walks to the car. Billy suddenly appears.

BILLY

K, hold up a sec.

KARIS

Billy, what do you want?

BILLY
I just wanted to say sorry for what
Lucy did.

KARIS
Where is the little bitch?

BILLY
She's goin' by her studio.

Billy reaches out for Karis arm. She starts to pull away.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Come here K, I going to give you a
Texas sized kiss.

KARIS
Let go Billy.

Desmond approaches.

DESMOND
(Yells)
That's twice tonight.

BILLY
Twice what?

DESMOND
You touched my wife without her
consent.

BILLY
What you gonna do about it boy?

DESMOND
Kick your ass.

Billy lets go of Karis and turns to face Desmond.

BILLY
Bring it on.

Billy puts up his fists. Desmond responds in kind. Karis steps back. Billy throws a jab, but Desmond steps around the punch. Billy tries a left, right combination, but again Desmond's quickness avoids the blows.

BILLY (CONT'D)
We goin' to keep shuffling Sambo,
or you got something to show me?

Billy throws another punch. Desmond blocks the punch and hits him with a strong right cross. Billy blinks in surprise.

Billy punches wildly. Desmond steps back and hits him with a left jab, right cross and knocks him down with a left hook.

Desmond towers over Billy.

DESMOND
Boxing lessons in Liverpool.

KARIS
Looks like you went from Sambo to Rambo.

DESMOND
(A fake Texas accent)
There's a new sheriff in town,
Kidd.

They walk to their car. Billy lays on the pavement, bleeding.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

The group finishes a number with Jerra singing a rock song. Jacob dancing with her and the others involved in the number.

DESMOND
Brilliant rehearsal, very proper dancing, yeah.

NATE
Up high J Bomb

Nate raises his hand to Jacob. They do a high five.

JACOB
Down low.

Jacob slaps Nate on the butt.

NATE
What was that?

JACOB
That's what the players do right, slap on the ass.

NATE
Alright J Man, we cool.

JACOB
You said it Big Dog.

DESMOND

Ok, that's enough. Everyone take a seat.

Everyone senses a tense mood and takes a seat. Desmond looks at Karis for reassurance.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

We've got a problem with the show.

NATE

Hey Dez, if it's J Man's dancing, I'll whip his ass into shape.

JACOB

Go fetch a bone, Big Dog.

Jacob simulates throwing a bone - the kids laugh.

DESMOND

No it's not the performing. The theatre's booked.

Molly looks worried.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

We cannot get the Grayson Theatre for our show.

CALLIE

What the hell?

DESMOND

Lucy Dunn has reserved the theatre out from under us.

CALLIE

How? We had it reserved.

DESMOND

I don't know, but she has some power in this town.

Molly stands up.

MOLLY

It was me.

CALLIE

Do what?

MOLLY

Lucy made me tell her some stuff about the show.

CALLIE

What the hell Molly. She came to me also, but I told her to kiss my ass.

MOLLY

I know I screwed up, but she threatened to kick me and my Mom out of the house.

CALLIE

I guess blood's thicker than water with Aunt Lucy.

MOLLY

We've got nowhere else to go.

KARIS

Guys, it really doesn't matter. Everyone was goin' to know when and where the show was anyway.

DESMOND

It's better she pulled this move now than later, so we can find another venue.

MOLLY

(Crying)

I'm sorry I let you down guys.

KARIS

It's ok honey. Let's circle up.

The kids circle around and hold hands.

DESMOND

Are we in this together?

GROUP

YEAH!

INT. BLAINE SENOR HIGH SCHOOL - LUNCH TIME

Desmond and Karis meet with Randy in the auditorium. The Group walks into the auditorium.

RANDY

That's a hell of a break guys.

KARIS

We will figure it out.

Desmond and Karis see the kids coming in.

DESMOND

Guys, do you have a few minutes?

The kids nod yes.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

Let's show Randy what we've been working on. Let's do the school colors, Black and Gold baby!

Desmond hands the CD to Chucky. The others assemble on stage.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

Do your thing Chucky.

The music starts and lights flash across the stage, with spot on Nate.

MONTAGE:

- Students in the hallway hear the music and file into the auditorium.
- Other school groups hear the music - jocks, chess club, science club, Christian group, dancers, teachers and the principal.
- They begin sitting down or swaying to the music.
- Shortly after, Lucy comes in and stands at the back.
- The auditorium is rocking. The dancers are exploding on the stage.

As the number ends, you hear a thunderous applause from the students and teachers assembled. The group smiles and high-fives each other. Randy appears on stage and grabs the microphone.

RANDY

Who wants to see more of this at our school?

CROWD

Shouts and screams of encouragement.

The crowd files out with Randy, Desmond, Karis and the kids left on the stage.

RANDY

Let's go see the principal.

PRINCIPAL MCKENZIE, 50+ white man in a suit, walks down the aisle toward the stage.

PRINCIPAL MCKENZIE

I'm here and shocked.

KARIS

I'm sorry Mr. McKenzie. We just got carried away.

PRINCIPAL MCKENZIE

No, I'm shocked at the performance of this wonderful group.

The kids looked surprised.

PRINCIPAL MCKENZIE (CONT'D)

This auditorium is available to you, if you need it.

The group jumps and shouts in delight. Desmond and Karis hug each other.

INT. HOWARD STUDIO - NIGHT

The group finishes dress rehearsal. Pizza boxes scattered around a table. Callie walks to the back of the studio and grabs a box and sets it down at the table. The kids collapse on the floor.

DESMOND

We're so proud of you guys. For your hard work, commitment and improving your talent.

RAYJEAN

Desmond and Karis, We're proud of you.

NATE

Yeah, man. You guys are the bomb.

CALLIE

We got you guys something.

Jacob pulls out 3 cowboy hats.

JACOB

You are part of our culture now. Here are you, Karis and Haley's Texas cowboy hats.

Karis and Haley put on their hats and start doing a Ho-Down. The group follows their dance. Desmond stops dancing.

DESMOND

Guys, I think we just added one more number. Let's do this.

INT. BLAINE HIGH HALLWAY - DAY

Individuals in the group pass each other in the hallway. They wear "personalized" tee shirts. Nate and Jacob give each other the high-bottom five they have created. Each of them call the others by their nickname.

INT. BLAINE HIGH AUDITORIUM - DAY

The group meets up at the end of the school day. They stand at the back of the auditorium looking at the stage. Desmond walks on stage.

DESMOND

What are you waiting for, let's get to work.

They run to the stage and begin the dress rehearsal.

INT. LUCY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

LUCY

Hey sis, whatcha doing tonight?

EMILY

Not much. Why are you dressed up?

LUCY

I thought for sure Molly told you?

EMILY

Told me what?

LUCY

She's performing tonight with Desmond's group.

EMILY

She didn't tell me.

LUCY

I thought you'd like to know how she put a knife in my back after I taught her how to dance.

EMILY

She can dance where she wants and I taught her to dance way before you.

LUCY

Well, maybe you guys can live on the street.

Lucy walks out of the house. Emily heads upstairs to change and head to the auditorium.

INT. BLAINE HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Desmond, Karis, Haley, John, Sara and the kids in the foyer greeting attendees. The auditorium fills up.

DESMOND

Let's get back stage and finish the setup.

Kids head back stage, Desmond walks over to Chucky and Randy at the soundboard.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

Chucky, do you have all the music ready?

CHUCKY

Yes.

DESMOND

Do you have all the lighting cues set?

CHUCKY

Yes.

DESMOND

Do you have...(cut off)

RANDY

...D, Chucky's got it covered. Get your ass back stage and get ready to blow our minds.

Emily arrives at the auditorium and spots Molly on stage.

EMILY

Molly, come here I need to talk to you.

MOLLY

Oh shit.

EMILY

Why didn't you tell me about this?

MOLLY

I was scared.

EMILY
Scared, why?

Lucy approaches from a distance.

MOLLY
I've always taken dance from Lucy
and I don't want to take from her
anymore.

EMILY
You don't have to.

MOLLY
But she can kick us out.

EMILY
It's better to be on the street
together than with her.

MOLLY
I love you Mom.

EMILY
I love you too honey. Get back
there and dance your ass off.

LUCY
(Walks briskly toward
Emily)
Em, I want your asses out of my
house by tonight.

EMILY
Little sister, we're out. Why don't
you go find a seat and see what
real dancing's like.

Emily turns away to find a seat. Lucy stands there fuming,
then turns and walks out of the auditorium.

INT. BLAIN HIGH AUDITORIUM BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Desmond looks around and sees Karis.

DESMOND
Karis, gather the group backstage.

Karis grabs the kids and they form a circle and hold hands.

DESMOND (CONT'D)
First, I'm very proud of you, even
before you take the stage.
(MORE)

DESMOND (CONT'D)

Let's give our best performance for Angel, for this town and for ourselves. Are we in this together.

GROUP

(group raises their hands)
YEAH!

DESMOND

Let's rock this place!

RANDY (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen, family and friends, I want to welcome you to the inaugural show by Desmond and Karis Howard, Directors.

(Applause)

The Howard's are donating 50% of the proceeds to a fund in the name of Angel Mendes. This will help his family get back on their feet and remain a part of the community.

Applause, then lights go off and silence. The screen in the back at the stage, shows a picture of Angel. Haley stands center stage with a flashlight - Desmond and Karis at her side. Haley sings "This Little Light of Mine."

The other performers walk into the auditorium from the back, holding flashlights and singing the same song. They make their way to stage and join Haley to finish the song. They dim their flashlights and scurry off stage. The kids are waiting in the wings, listening.

KARIS

Just wait, wait.

Suddenly, the crowd erupts in cheers and applause. The performers break into smiles. The lights come on.

KARIS (CONT'D)

Callie, get ready for "Country Girl."

The performers put on cowboy hats and head to the stage wings. You hear a loud "Yee Haw" on the track.

MONTAGE

- Callie sings "Thank God I'm a Country Girl." The performers line the two aisles, doing a country line dance. The pull some audience members up to do a little square dance move.

- Molly center stage in her ballet costume. "The Nutcracker" begins playing and she works on point across the stage. About 20 seconds into the song, a scratch in the music and a hip-hop version plays. Molly stands perturbed.

- Nate enters in a joker costume with a run and flip, he begins break dancing. The music switches back and forth from ballet version to hip-hop. RayJean completes a break dancing routine during part of the song.

The curtain drops.

CUT TO:

ALICE

Yeah, that's my girl. Best little break dancer in all West Texas.

CUT TO:

LUCY

What in the hell was that?

BILLY

Looked like some kinda weird ballet dance.

LUCY

Bunch a shit.

CUT TO:

Stage. The curtain rises, the sound of crowd noises on the music track.

MONTAGE

- The performers in a static standing pose with head lowered. With the first downbeat of the music, the dancers fall forward to a lunge. "Rhythm Nation," by Janet Jackson plays. Dancers exhibit military movements. The curtain falls.

- The curtain rises, a black gospel choir in blue choir robes. Danitha leads the choir in a white robe. They begin the upbeat gospel tune, "Jesus is my Friend." Dancers clap to the beat. Belle stands up to lead the audience clapping.

- Spotlight centers on Chucky and Jacob sitting on stools center stage. Chucky plays a guitar and Jacob sings the song, "Gotta get Through This." Molly dances alone on stage.

CUT TO:

MIKE

(Stands up)

That's my boy right there that just sang that song.

JAIME

Sit down honey, you are embarrassing.

MIKE

Didn't you just see what Jacob did, it was amazing.

JAIME

Yes, I saw it and it was amazing.

CUT TO:

- Jose stands - back to the audience. Moon shines down to spotlight Jose, "Dancing in the moonlight" cheesy disco version plays. Jose turns, dressed like Liberace. He sings emphasizing his accent. The crowd gives a tremendous ovation.

- Part of the school band plays in the back of the auditorium with Nate leading the procession toward the stage singing the song, "Black and Gold."

- Other performers dance on stage. The football team and cheerleaders come on stage toward the end - in their black and gold school uniforms. The number ends with everyone in the auditorium on their feet applauding and dancing.

RANDY

Ladies and gentlemen, put your hands together and let's show this group what you thought of their performance.

Audience stands and claps. Danitha's mother is cries. Jacob's father whoops. Molly's mom waves and screams approval. Belle raises her hands. John and Sara embrace, dancing to the music. Lucy grabs Billy's hand.

CUT TO:

LUCY

Let's get the hell out of here.

BILLY

I kinda wanted to see the last part.

LUCY

Move your ass Billy.

The performers on stage. "Seasons of Love" plays. Charlie joins the group on stage. Each member moves forward to center stage every 15 seconds to take a bow.

Desmond and Karis take center stage at the end of the bows and hold Haley up. Desmond sets Haley down and grabs the microphone.

DESMOND

Thank you. First, I'd like to give special thanks to John and Sara Caufield, thanks for your help. This town is now our home and we want you to know how much we appreciate your support. Thanks, Harmony. Let's party!

Disco music starts and people head to the stage dancing. People in the aisles dance. The group forms a circle on the stage, holds hands and raises their hands.

GROUP

YEAH!

Credits -

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Billy and Lucy drive out of town in a pickup with furniture in the back and a small trailer.

LUCY

It was time for us to head to the big city anyway.

BILLY

Yeah, Abilene has a better football team.

They notice a lot of cars heading in the opposite direction.

LUCY

Why the hell are all these cars headed to Harmony?

INT. LUCY'S OLD STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Desmond and Karis walk up and open the door of the studio in town and look outside. There are kids lined up around the block.

DESMOND

You ready to start auditions?

KARIS

We might need a bigger studio.

They wave kids into the studio.

FADE OUT.