

TREBLE

Written by

Katie Conway

tre•ble

A term used to describe a specific type of Irish Dance Step where the dancer executes three distinct sounds in quick succession, typically performed on the balls of the feet.

TREBLE

WRITTEN BY KATIE CONWAY

OVER BLACK

Sound Up: Reels (Fiddle) by Chris and Michelle McLoughlin plays

Sound up: slow beat of hard shoes begins over music.

A skinny tall blonde woman sprints on a hotel gym treadmill. The pounding of the treadmill matching the beat of the music. She looks over to reveal a tall brunette running next to her. They start to race.

A middle aged brunette woman squints her eyes open to the sunlight peeking through her hotel room curtain. She fumbles over her nightstand. There is a foil "happy thanksgiving crown" and an unfinished white wine glass. She opens a bottle of Listerine and swishes it in her mouth.

... The beat picks up to a full strong treble

A mom-aged Italian woman takes notes in a syllabus - highlighting competitor names.

An older gentleman in a wheelchair is pushed around a hotel ballroom set-up - pointing out changes to the staff that scuttles behind him.

A 17-year old boy is picked up by a car service outside a large home at dusk.

FADE IN:

MUSIC CONTINUES

TIGHT SHOT:

PLYWOOD DANCEFLOOR

A long lean dancer - short shorts extenuating her orange colored spray tanned legs (it looks like she did it herself) - strong calves and leg muscle as she shuffles strong and controlled. She moves across the plywood square in a swift diagonal line as her teacher trails inches behind her as she moves.

TEACHER
 (brushing and slapping her hand on
 her thigh to replicate the beat)
 Da, da, da..DA! I need to hear
 those first 3 clearly... and **ba,**
ba, ba BA

The dancer does the four beat again. And again.

As her body is revealed - her pale stomach and arms are
 revealed in her sports bra and little shorts

TEACHER:
 Again... and **da, da, da DA.**

Her teacher's ear is now almost to the ground listening
 intently.

She's hitting her hands so hard against her thighs to make
 the beats it looks like it could leave a bruise.

TEACHER:
 I said **ba, da, da ... DA..** get the
DA!

Sound Up: sound of the those four treble beats grow larger...

PAN OUT:

EST. OVERHEAD SHOT - LARGE HOTEL BALLROOM

A sea of dancers all dressed in variations of the above
 outfit. Each dancer occupies a 4x4 practice square of plywood
 laid flat on the carpet of a grand hotel ballroom. It looks
 like a checker board with shiny pieces in every square. Each
 dancer dances different steps, on different tempos making a
 different noise with their hard shoes... but to the same
 reel. The sound becomes a rhythmic re-mix reminiscent of beat
 boxing.

Sound Up: Chaotic harmony of multiple reel dances

FLASHING LIGHT - BLACK PHOTO BACKGROUND

Girls are taking portraits fully dressed in their costumes
 against black backgrounds

FADE IN:

QUICK SHOTS - INT. PHILADELPHIA MARRIOTT HOTEL BALLROOM AND HALLWAYS

Girls are everywhere..half dressed in bloomers and sports bras. On their heads are big curly wigs. They have bad orange spray tans (but only on their legs, their exposed arms and tummies pre-costume change reveal pale Irish skin) and full faces of pageant makeup.

Some critique their dance schoolmates, sitting cross legged as the other performs for their peers. Others more intense, their teachers taking notes on the floor with them.

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - FAR CORNER

ZOOM IN:

A TALL, LEAN PUT TOGETHER AND INTIMIDATING WOMAN, (KRIS KERRI, 36) HAS HER DANCER BACKED INTO A CORNER. HER WINGSPAN TO THE REST OF THE ROOM AS TO BLOCK WHAT THE DANCER IS DOING. SHE INSTRUCTS OONA TO KICK HER LEG HIGHER AND STRAIGHTER. OONA IS TALL, LANKY BUT BEAUTIFUL - SHE HAS THE POSE OF MISS AMERICA, BUT AN EMPTINESS TO HER BEING. SHE IS LONELY AFTER ALL - AN ONLY CHILD, CONSTANTLY #1 AT A SOLO SPORT WHERE OTHER GIRLS ENVY HER AND WISH TO SEE HER DOWNFALL, SHE IS HOMESCHOOLED AND SHY, SHE HASN'T MANY FRIENDS AND SPENDS MOST OF HER TIME WITH HER MOTHER... SHE IS A DOLL THAT GETS SHINED UP TO PERFORM AND PUT BACK IN THE BOX EACH NIGHT...BUT WITH BAGS OF ICE TAPED AROUND HER KNEES. NO ONE ELSE WOULD KNOW OF HER INSECURITIES - HER SHIELD IS THICK KEEPING HER MYSTIQUE RADIATING THE PICTURE OF A PERFECT WINNER. ON STAGE SHE FLOATS LIKE POETRY IN MOTION (OONA KELLY, 16).

INT. PRACTICE ROOM - CONT'D

Oona kicks her leg so high and so straight, it looks like it goes behind her ear... like she has Barbie ligaments.

KRIS

Fine. Better than last week. Again please.

Oona complies. A group of girls gawk as they walk by... sipping Starbucks Frappuccino's.

UNNAMED GIRL #1:
She'll win again

GIRL #2:
(raising her eyebrows)
Who knows... it's a leap year.

GIRL #1
(giggling)
With that name.. I mean, she
literally can't get 2nd. How
embarrassing.

They sip and carry on by.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN PHILADELPHIA MARRIOTT VALET LINE -
SIMULTANEOUSLY

It is chaotic as families pull up in the valet line, checking in and unloading bags and boxes of gear.

One man is wearing a shirt that reads "Feis Father" - he stands useless as his wife buzzes around him.

Another dad slides out a case of Natural Light from his minivan trunk and secures it on a luggage cart under dance bags.

CUT TO:

INT. BALLROOM PRACTICE AREA

CLOSE UP:

A girl high clicks

BACK TO:

EXT. PHILADELPHIA MARRIOTT VALET -SIMULTANEOUSLY

Pushed off to the side of the pavement, a local news reporter delivers a live hit

Martha

By now, you have likely heard of Riverdance. Well, I am at the site of where it all begins. The Mid-Atlantic Regionals. A competition where Michael Flatley, the king of Riverdance, used to compete.

Two misbehaved MALE DANCERS pop in the background of Martha's shot giving her bunny ears and sticking out their tongues. One of the boys is a tall blonde with spikey gelled hair, he's wearing a soccer jersey and giving off bad boy. He has a mature, sharp sense of humor and a Brogue (Finley, 17). Finley moved to New Jersey from Dublin just last year - he had already won titles in Irish dance overseas and is known in the dance world. From a well-off family, Finn (for short) thinks he is an adult, that he is way past needing his parents, and is mature in dating and life. He is not totally wrong, and his age is questionable... he says he is 17 and definitely still in high school but looks like he may have been held back and already has lived quite hard. Martha doesn't notice the boys in the shot.

Martha

(continuing)

I'm taking a peek inside the Mid-Atlantic Regionals - "The Oireachtas!" a BIG Irish Step Dancing competition that is happening right under our noses!

Two girls bob by hopscotching over the camera cords, big bouncy wigs on their heads.

CUT TO THE
MEDIUM SHOT OF
MARTHA'S NEW
CAMERA:

FINN

(to Martha in her shot)
Are you lost love?

Martha

(pleasantly surprised - pointing
the mic towards him)

(MORE)

KRIS (CONT'D)

Why hello, will you be dancing this weekend?

FINN

Ah dance you say? That's what this all for? A bit airy for a guy, don't ya think?

CUT TO WIDE SHOT
SHOWING FINLEY'S
FEET:

Finn is now fluttering his feet doing fancy footwork in his adidas sambas better than Michael Flatley (he knows the news camera shot not capturing it). His upper body remains totally still and stiff. As the cameraman notices he motions to stay above his waist.

POV: The news camera shot is shaky as he tries to shift off his tripod to capture the dancing.

FINN

Oh, no love - we're here for the football match.

As the camera man jolts the shot down to catch his feet, Finn pulls his leg back and motions an elegant (soccer) kick.

He winks to camera and walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. NEWS STUDIO

NEWS ANCHOR

(squinting)

Martha, we may have just met him.

And what is that the girls are wearing ...are those...

CUT TO:

Montage of Big bouncy curly wigs sit on top of the girls heads as they skip thru the lobby with their friends giggling and gossiping

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

Martha has now walked inside for a show and tell... her cameraman artfully snaking his cable through troves of girls who jump over it instead of going around them nonplussed by their presence.

MEDIUM TREATED
TV NEWS SHOT:

PROUD MOTHER
(talking into Martha's mic)
That right - and she has won every
Feis for the past 18 weeks... we
are so proud.

(pointing to an unwieldly RV parked
in the valet line - cars are
struggling to maneuver around it)

We drive our RV all around the
country making sure Ryan can
compete...

Martha
(nodding into the mic)
And now what's a feis...?

ENTER A WHITE HAired MAN WITH
NUTCRACKER TEETH. HE POINTS TO THE
CAMERA ...SHEAMUS O'DONNELLY HE IS
WEARING A SASH AND GOLD MEDALLION
AROUND HIS NECK, SHINY PATENT LEATHER
SHOES PROPPED UP IN THE FOOTRESTS OF
HIS WHEELCHAIR. HE IS GIVING IRISH
GODFATHER AND CAN SNIFF OUT OUTSIDERS.
(SHEAMUS O'DONNELLY, 76)

SHEAMUS
(Yelling like an angry Irish man-
bright red face fully taken over
camera lens)

You have your shite!
No filming!
No cameras!

FREEZE FRAME ON
SHEAMUS'S ANGRY
FACE:

(SUBTITLE)
Sheamus O'Donnelly, Godfather of
Irish Dance

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROTUNDA BAR

Ladies are crowded around tables at the Rotunda Bar. One group (we later learn to be the Tierney School)

SHEAMUS:

As President Emeritus of the
coismisun le rinci gaelcha (the
words jumble in his dentures - he
is pointing to the doors) I kindly
ask that you get yer arse out! And
that part's not Galeic! ARSE OUT!

Martha is shocked and scared... she starts to shuffle away in her heels, her unwieldy cameraman trying to tie up jumbled cords as Sheamus chases her out on two wheels.

CUT TO:

A trio of young men in the 30s walk by laughing at Sheamus antics. They carry instrument cases - have a cool confidence about them, and are attractive. They are clearly musicians.

FADE TO:

INT. CONNELLY HOUSE - BATHROOM, DAWN, SAME DAY

Sheila Connelly stands in a tiny bathroom - she has hair dye in her roots and a worn white bathrobe. She looks in the mirror then takes a deep sigh before leaning her elbows on the free standing sink - the slightly rusted pipe is exposed, she buries her hands in her head. She quickly jerks up and looks at the dye now covering her fingers.

SHEILA

(Closing her eyes and looking up to
the ceiling)

Girls! I'm not gonna come in there
again!

FADE OUT:

EXT. CONNELLY HOUSE - DAWN, MINUTES LATER

A cedar shake ranch on a small plot of land. A short man with a friendly face - he is dressed in jeans and New Balance sneakers...

and a T-Shirt that says "Feis Fathers of America" tucked into the jeans where his firm belly protrudes - not falling over his belt but proudly . He is soft spoken but kind - emotional without admitting it though he balls like a baby anytime his daughters start to dance. He is doing his best to raise 3 girls as a snack food delivery driver...That's his box truck is parked across from the house. It is mostly never enough for his wife and that deep Irish shame is starting to eat away at him...though he is always jolly around his girls (Jack Connelly, 44) maneuvers bags into the back of a '94 Astro van like a jigsaw puzzle. He takes a sip of the diet coke in a 711 big gulp cup resting on the back bumper.

CUT TO:

INT. GIRLS BEDROOM - MADDIE AND CHLOE'S ROOM

Maddie and Chloe roll over in beds - their cluttered bedroom has posters covering one wall and neatly framed pictures on the other.

Sound Up: A pink alarm next to Chloe's bed goes off blaring a pop tune.

(Maddie) Chloe!

Chloe starts muttering in her sleep nonsense before Maddie walks across the room and with one arm, stiff arms her from her twin bed rolling her onto the floor. Chloe hits the ground with a thud and wakes up.

CHLOE
MADDIE!!!

MADDIE
(rolling her eyes)
Move it or lose it Bucko.

Maddie walks out.

CUT TO:

INT. CIARA BEDROOM

Ciara rolls over in bed - her eyes open and she flicks on the light to reveal the side of her nightstand that is up against her bed. It is plastered with photos of the Princeton campus, pictures of dancers holding up big trophies on a podium and a signed headshot of Jean Butler (Riverdance female star).

CIARA
 (whispering to the photos)
 I promise

OLDEST CHILD IN A HIGH PERFORMING FAMILY, CIARA CONNELLY (16) IS THE BEST STUDENT IN THE TIERNEY SCHOOL AT THE MOMENT - AND BACK AT HS , THE VALEDICTORIAN OF HER CLASS, SCHOOL PRESIDENT FIELD HOCKEY CAPTAIN AND MORE. SHE HAS A LOT ON HER PLATE AND IS DRIVEN BY THE LACK SHE SEES IN HER FAMILY FINANCIALLY, BUT MOTIVATED BY THE ABUNDANCE OF LOVE, SUPPORT AND PRIDE SHE ALSO FEELS FROM THEM. SHE IS LOGICAL - TYPE A BUT NOT STIFF.

CUT TO:

INT. ASTRO VAN - MOMENTS LATER

The family and belongings are piled in the van as they back out of the driveway. There is a box of Entenmann's powdered donuts open in the console and Jack grabs one, taking a bite as powdered sugar falls down his t-shirt. In the backseat, Ciara is locked in... she has the 3rd row to herself with her legs stretched out and her discman in her ears. She is performing her steps with her hands. Chloe is drinking a chocolate milk and Maddie is already back asleep her face smushed against the clear glass window.

JACK

(driving - one hand on wheel, one on donut)
 Oh wait

Jack stops the car next to a white box truck that is parked on the opposite side of the street just over the edge of what would be the property line. He jumps out of the van and opens the door of the truck and locks it from the inside before getting back in.

SHEILA

(sarcasm)
 Oh yeah definitely don't let anyone take it off our hands. The pretzel truck goes so well with our aesthetic

SHEILA (CONT'D)

I do need to get something from
Diane.

The van turns off the dead end street before stopping in front of the neighbors house. Without getting out of the car Sheila opens the mailbox and slides an envelope into her purse.

Jack nods.

WIDE SHOT - VAN DRIVING DOWN GARDEN STATE PARKWAY

INT. ASTRO VAN - CONTINUOUS

The van is now driving down the garden state parkway - the girls each doing their thing in the backseat... sleeping, Ciara discman listening to her routine music.

SMOOTH FADE TO:

EXT. MARRIOTT VALET LINE

Rows of shiny black suburbans and new model mini vans line the valet driveway, as bellman help families unload hat boxes, dress bags, coolers onto luggage carts

The blue Astro van pulls in. Jack hops out of the van to stop the bellman who starts to open the back trunk. He mouths that they are not checking in.

JACK

Just dropping off - thanks

The girls roll out of the van and are greeted by an excited (yet surprisingly Italian looking girl)

FRANCESCA

Ciara! Come! You have to see...

Sheila and Maddie, Chloe follow behind into the lobby. Jack gets back in the van and pulls away. They pass by the reporter.

Sheila, Maddie and Chloe see a group they know and peel off. Frankie drags Ciara into the Starbucks in the hotel lobby.

SHE IS OLIVE TONED WITH BROWN HAIR. FRANKIE IS CIARA'S FRENEMY IN THE TIERNEY SCHOOL - THEY GO TO DIFFERENT HIGH SCHOOLS BUT ARE THE SAME AGE AND ONLY CHAMPION DANCERS FROM THE TIERNEY SCHOOL IN THEIR COMPETITION. FRANKIE'S MOTHER - INSISTS - IS IRISH...JUST BLACK IRISH... AND HER FATHER IS 100% ITALIAN. FRANKIE IS CONFIDENT BUT BRATTY - SHE HASN'T HAD TO FIGHT FOR MUCH IN LIFE. SHE ENVIES THE EASE THAT CIARA SUCCEEDS IN THINGS - SCHOOL, FAMILY, SPORTS, DANCE(FRANKIE, 16).

CUT TO:

INT: HOTEL STARBUCKS SHOP

CIARA

Can I have a grande caramel frap?
For Ciara (KER-a)

The barista stares blankly

CIARA (CONT'D)

Its spelt like Ciara (C-ERA)

The barista immediately understands

FRANKIE:

giggling to Ciara

OMG you totally missed Sheamus with this reporter... we were all watching from the rotunda bar

She looks around to see who is in earshot
OH! More importantly... did you see **Riley Ryan?** She gained like 10 pounds at boarding school. That's one knocked down off our list right? She got 8th last year.

CIARA:

Boarding school?

FRANKIE:

Yeah her mom caught her fooling around with one of the O'Donnell dancers last summer - you know Patrick... and **OFF** she went.

CIARA AND FRANKIE

giggling in Unison
And one, And two...

Ciara taps Frankie on the lower back
and OFF YOU GO!

CUT TO:

INT. MARRIOTT LOBBY

MARTHA

So then tell us Sheamus, if its not
just Riverdance, what is Irish
Dancing?

CUT TO:

MONTAGE OF MAN ON STREET CAMERA SHOTS

(M.O.S. Man)
Its's like clogging right?

(M.O.S. Italian Family)
oh its the tapping - our neighbors
in Hoboken did it. Damn apartment
in the Irish part of town. Tip
tapping clickity clackin' on the
floor above us. goddamn nuisance.
We'll never get along.

(M.O.S. Girl in Scottish dance
class) I thought that is what I was
signing up for ..

(M.O.S. Excited woman) oh! I saw
that commercial for Riverdance!
They walk on their toes!

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ESCALATOR:

Trisha Tierney heads down the escalator. Her tight white
polyester suit hugging her mid-section.

She eyes up Kris Kerri who passes her heading up the
escalator. Oona is glued to her side, wearing a warm up suit
with "Kerri School" embroidered on the jacket.

CUT TO:

INT. MARRIOT LOBBY ROTUNDA BAR, MOMENTS LATER

Trisha Tierney approaches a group of dance moms - the most motley crew you can dream up - and a woman with the makeup of a drag queen hands Trish a glass of wine in a clear plastic cup. She takes a sip, her red lip stick leaving a mark

Sheila, Maddie and Chloe have joined the group.

PAN TO:

CLOSEUP ON EACH CHARACTER:

(O.C. V.O - Maddie's voice)

"Ugly makeup lady" - We don't actually know her first name. She is a retired pageant queen.. Feels most comfortable adding purple eyeshadow to a child's face. Her kids actually quit dance but she still comes for the fanfare and to interject where she is not needed. She is controller of the boxed white wine this evening - handing out in plastic cups.

Penina smoking inside while holding a large brown wig, separating the curls by pulling them apart.

Penina Sicilia - Frankie's mom. She is stout about 4 foot tall with dark brown skin, a raspy voice and a smokers cough since she smokes like a chimney. She is the type of mom that would do dirty for her kid to win and doesn't have much concern for the feelings of other people's kids

Megan has her legs up on the pole that circle the rotunda bar - stretching and making eye contact with one of the musicians.

Megan was adopted. Her mom signed her up to get "in touch with her Irish culture". And she's better than all of us...

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

she also doesn't care what anyone
thinks and is the big sister we
didn't ask for

Finley sitting with Sheila and Maddie - he is helping Chloe
tie her too big soft shoes.

Finley - Finn, is here alone. His
grandparents will come to watch
tomorrow. We are actually unclear
on his age - he transferred to our
school after moving from Dublin
last year.

WIDE SHOT OF THE LOBBY

CLOSEUP OF SHEILA AND MADDIE

Frankie and Ciara approach and stand next to the respective
moms, the resemblance and contrast clear.

TRISHA

Ciara! She has arrived!

She brushes past Frankie.

(O.C. V.O - Maddie's voice)

And... our trusty Trisha Tierney.

Trisha pours herself a glass of white wine from a box sitting
on the lobby table.

TIGHT SHOT

PENINA:

Shel, where are you staying?

SHEILA

Oh, across the street...

PENINA

Oh the new loews - its nice there!

(Sheila nods)

UGLY MAKEUP LADY

Have you seen Oona's new dress?

FINN

It is... a whole new look ladies.

Straight off the runway, celebs
will be clamoring to wear it on the
carpet

The women looked intrigued

UML

No way...

FINLEY

Right no way... its not Chanel its
neon green sequins...

They scoff at him. And laugh.

PAN TO:

WIDE SHOT OF HOTEL LOBBY FROM ABOVE - LIKE A MAP WE CAN SEE
ALL THE DIFFERENT SCHOOLS AND COMPETITORS LAID OUT

CUT TO:

TIGHT SHOT:

Kris Kerri has Oona's foot in her hand and is manually
stretching her arches. Oona is reading something, we can't
tell what. Oona's mom is off to the side polishing a hard
shoe. Mrs. Kelly is the epitome of a Irish Mummy -
overbearing and protective with a sweet exterior.

(V.O. Maddie) So by now
you might guess that OONA
is the #1 girl. She is
always in Ciara and
Francesca's
competition... and always
wins first. Her teacher,
Kris Kerri, used to be a
power stock broker but
quit her job when her
school kept winning.
Needlessly to say..she is
ultra competitive.

CUT TO:

TIGHT SHOT:

Mick Murraray holds court - he is a bit scary looking.

ZOOM IN:

A man in his 30s, skinny ripped jeans and a tight t-shirt. He
has side swept hair and an earring. He has flair and an
attitude. (MICK MURRAY, 37)

V.O. MADDIE

And of course....master manipulator Mick Murray. The man who
gets whatever he wants.

He is chasing a male dancer around as he does his steps on the marble floor of the lobby

MICK

No lazy feet - up with it... **HA,**
ha,ha, HA!

He stomps his feet

V.O. MADDIE

A first generation Irishman, he is known for having the best male dancers in the game. There is a contention between first and second generation - they look down on us - feel like we are always one step behind the trends and steps coming from the motherland.

And he runs a business bringing dresses from the best designers back home in Ireland. They are the most expensive dresses reserved for the best dancers.

But he is unphased by her tbh. He is sneaky though - makes you feel like you need a shower after you interact with him. Willing to play dirty to make sure his dancers win.

CUT TO:

WIDE SHOT OVERHEAD VIEW OF LOBBY:

The white haired man is being zipped around the lobby barking orders at his handler

CUT TO:

CLOSEUP SHOT OF SHEAMUS

MADDIE (V.O)

And that is Sheamus O'Donnelly. The Godfather of dance if you will.

MONTAGE VIDEO OF RIVERDANCE:

He taught Michael Flatley.

INT: SHEAMUS'S HEADQUARTERS THAT LOOKS LIKE AN IRISH MOB OFFICE

MADDIE (V.O)

(MORE)

MICK (CONT'D)

And for the last 30 years has run every Irishman on the Eastern Seaboard.

EXT: NEWARK IN THE 50s - FLASHBACK

An Irishman in a cap negotiating a deal

MADDIE (V.O)

His dad was part of the Irish mob - and thankfully for Sheamus that folded because I'm not sure he was cut out for that line of work

INT. 50s LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Sheamus dancing as a teenager with his mob dad looking on ...

V.O. MADDIE

But its a learned behavior and now this is the closest thing we have to an Irish Mafia on the East Coast. Sheamus does not like outsiders and he does not like to be questioned.

CUT TO:

INT: HOTEL LOBBY - TIERNEY SCHOOL

Everyone is goofing off and drinking wine

V.O. MADDIE

And then... there's us. The Tierney School

CUT TO:

EXT. ELKS LODGE - RECENT FLASHBACK

An old house converted to an Elks Lodge; A sign Reads: Asbury Elks Local 1997. Cement steps and an iron railing lead to the front door.

INT. ELKS LODGE - RECENT FLASHBACK

The hall is dark with carpet that looks like it smells of stale beer. The walls are lined in dark wood paneling, a long hallway leading to an empty wooden floored room where Mrs. Tierney sits in the corner.

Chairs are stacked in a neat row along the wall. Tierney is holding a lit cigarette - the room is hazy as her hand hovers over a boombox.

There is a platform in the other corner where girls huddle doing their homework between their turns dancing. Behind the platform side of the room, a big sliding glass door is open to a dark bar. There is one old guy drinking a beer and on-looking.

Ciara is doing sit-ups and training exercises in the corner.

V.O. MADDIE

Trisha Tierney doesn't really run a tight ship. She has charged 30 dollars a month for the last 10 years for lessons - and rides the wave of a handful of champion level dancers she has that keep her in the mix at the high level competitions

Trisha Tierney prompting dancers without lifting her arse from her seat

SOUND UP: music playing from a boombox

TRISHA

and hop, 2, 3!

Finley is coaching Ciara off in a corner of the room

V.O. MADDIE

Luckily Finley's dad's job moved him here from Dublin last year -

FLASHBACK- Finley holding up big trophies. Dancing Amazingly

He was a champion overseas - and trained by the best teacher in Ireland

FLASHBACK - Finley meeting Trisha for first time, her arms wide-open for a hug, huge smile on her face. He looks glaringly at his parents

And unluckily for him... his parents had to move here ..

(MORE)

MICK (CONT'D)

where Trisha Tierney is the only
Irish Dance teacher within 50
miles.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. STAGE WITH A PODIUM

Girls are on the 3 steps of the podium holding up
trophies...Ciara is off to the side in a row of girls
clutching medals (clearly not near the top 3)

V.O. MADDIE

We try our best...but we never
quite have the edge. And this year
Ciara has a real chance to make it
to the World Championships in
Ireland. Which would be the first
time anyone from our school has
qualified... and the first time my
parents would get to go back to
meet their relatives.

CUT TO:

INT. ELKS LODGE - FLASHBACK... YEARS AGO

Ciara and Maddie are young. Maddie is in a pink ballerina
outfit. Ciara looks scared.

V.O. MADDIE

I never wanted to do this. I was on
my way to ballet class but somebody
got stage fright staying alone. So
here I am still...almost 10 years
later Irish Step Dancing.

Ciara's eyes are welled with tears

TRISHA TIERNEY

Oh won't you be a good sister today
and stay with your big sis?

Maddie nods and takes her place on the dance floor next to
Ciara

V.O. Maddie

Middle child situation if I've ever
seen one...

Sound Up: jig plays

Trisha puts her hands on each of the young girls backs and with a little push ...

TRISHA TIERNEY
And one, and two, and **OFF YOU GO**

They start to dance simple steps

CUT TO:

MONTAGE: Ciara and Maddie as young dancers in simple looking competitions. They wear kilts and their hair curled. Chloe is just a toddler dancing in shoes too big that flop past her toes as she tries to keep up with her sisters.

V.O. MADDIE
1,2 ... off we went.

BACK TO:

INT. ROTUNDA BAR - PRESENT DAY

Every member of the Tierney School sits around their claimed lobby table.

Megan Martin is a 16 yo Asian girl. She is a rebel - she likes to make it uncomfortable about why she is an Irish dancer...and often makes up stories to prank people. She was adopted and her Irish parents, her mother Laura and dad Mick thought it would be a good way to introduce to her to the culture. They are saintly - salt of the Earth people

Frankie and her mom Penina. Not saintly

Finley Delight and his parents, Hart and Winston (Winnie) Delight. Quick witted Brits who have no time for the BS. And barely any time for the Irish for that matter. They are so ahead of the game after competing overseas...there is a sense of elitism

CUT TO:

Tierney stares at Ciara

TIERNEY
She really needs a new dress

Sheila gives a half smile looking defeated and nods her head
yes

SHEILA
That's 1500 dollars Trish

Trish puts her arms up.

TIERNEY
You want to win? I can only do what
I can do

FINLEY
(To camera - out of earshot)
Which isn't much...

V.O. Maddie
You see... it wasn't always like
this.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - FLASHBACK

Archive video of girls dancing in kilts and straight hair in
the early 1900s-1980s

FLASHBACK - EXT. SUBURBAN NJ STREET 1970S

A young Sheila and a friend skip down the street from school

V.O. MADDIE
My mom had this friend who Irish
Step Danced. She remembered her
going to Ireland and dancing and
she thought "if I ever have girls,
I would love for them to do this.."

MONTAGE OF THE 3 CONNELLY GIRLS GROWING IN AGE IN THEIR DANCE
COSTUMES

V.O. MADDIE
Except when we started, it was more
like this :

VIDEO AND PICTURES OF GIRLS IN LOOSE SHIRLY TEMPLE CURLS AND
SIMPLE DRESSES DANCING THE CEILI ON A MAKESHIFT STAGE
OUTDOORS

V.O. MADDIE
And less like this

MADDIE FLASHES TO MONTAGE OF RIDICULOUS OUTFITS

A clown looking girl made up wearing a big wig does a creepy
face into the camera.

Girls crying both tears of joy and tears of pain

CLOSE-UP:

GIRL 1
(showing off a neon pink ridiculous
looking dress)
My dress is made of **raw** imported
silk specially dyed this hot pink

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP:

GIRL 2:
(lifting up her skirt)
Look what happens when I do this!
10 thousand sequins!

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP:

GIRL 3:
(holding a pile of curly hair on
top of her head)
Last year, I had a migraine for 3
days and failed by math finals
cause by the weight of these wigs
bearing down on my neck... but I
got 12th at the Nationals!

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP:

GIRL 4:
(lifting up a limp ankle in a dance
shoe)

(MORE)

MICK (CONT'D)

My foot is currently broken but
everything's non-refundable

FADE IN OVER
BLACK:

Sound up: WATERLOO BY ABBA

Sound Up: the screech of bagpipes being tuned
MADDIE V.O.
It was the innocent and easy
times...

FADE IN:

EXT. WIDE OPEN FIELD TURNED PARKING LOT AT DAWN - FLASHBACK 8
YEARS AGO

Coach buses are lined up on the edge wide open plot of land.
A man in a kilt pulls out a cooler from the underbelly of a
bus and shakes off ice water from a can of beer offering it
to his friend

MAN 1

Ay?

MAN 2

Just the one

A teenage parking attendant motions in the blue Astro van
directing it to a spot on the makeshift field - the van
wobbles with every bump in the dirt field

CUT TO:

INT. ASTRO VAN

The van is full and the Connelly girls are sleeping. Chloe's
head is knocked backwards in her car seat accentuating her
too short bangs that stick up

SHEILA

Vidal Sassoon - that's the last
time I ask you to do anything

JACK

(shaking his head and laughs. Motioning his head up and then
and making scissors with his two fingers)

The head up or down.. it was a
50/50 chance

Ciara is awake now. Her discman is in her ears and she is making her steps with her hands.

Jack rolls down the driver's window with a hand crank. It gets stuck and he shoves his arm through the partially opened window and manually pushes it down with his forearm.

TEENAGE ATTENDANT
It's 5 dollars please

Jack hands over a crisp bill.

PAN TO:

EXT. FESTIVAL SET-UP - IN THE DISTANCE

Vendor tents line a large square of the field setting up everything from dance shoes to wigs to Irish mementos. In the middle men on their knees tape together sheets of plywood to make a stage...strips of silver duct tape securing them in place and creating a checkboard.

EXT. FESTIVAL - SEAN KEANE'S SHOE STAND

A HANDSOME GUY IN HIS EARLY THIRTIES - STRAPPING IN A TIGHT BLACK TEE AND SKINNY JEANS LAYS OUT PILES OF FRESH LEATHER DANCE SHOES - THE SIGN BEHIND HIM READS "KEANE'S HANDMADE DANCE SHOES". SEAN IS A FIRST GENERATION-AMERICAN STRAIGHT FROM COUNTY CORK AND EVERY WOMAN'S FAVORITE EYE-CANDY FIXTURE AT THE COMPETITIONS. THE GIRLS NEVER GET A CHANCE TO ACTUALLY WEAR THEIR SHOES DOWN BECAUSE THEY WILL FIND EXCUSES TO COME SEE SEAN.(SEAN KEANE)

BACK TO VAN IN
FIELD:

EXT. SHOT THRU THE VAN WINDSHIELD:

Sheila is applying her makeup in the front seat passenger mirror. She gestures to a woman unloading a green Subaru (Nana)

NANA IS VERY TAN (BLACK IRISH) WITH SHORT WHITE HAIR. SHE IS WEARING COTTON SHORTS ALMOST DOWN TO HER KNEES AND A BIG BAGGY T-SHIRT WITH TEVAS. SHE SMILES BIG AND HER IRISH EYES TURN INTO SLIVERS DISAPPEARING WITH HER SOFT WRINKLES IN THE MORNING SUN.

SOUND UP: Loudspeaker in the distance
 V.O. Unknown Speaker
 "Testing one two - WELCOME! To the 32nd annual Rockland County Feis and Irish Festival. We are planning for a beautiful day here on the grounds - dancing, music and let's not forget, our famous Irish Soda Bread contest!

Nana holds up what looks like a brick wrapped in tinfoil to Mary and winks.

CUT TO:

INT. ASTRO VAN SLIDING DOOR

Sound up: heavy pull of the old van door gritty in its tracks

The girls begin tumbling out. Jack walks around to give Judy an assist as she hops from the door a foot above the ground. Off the sides, families begin to unload their vans. Coolers, dress bags, hat boxes, folding chairs.

PAN OUT:

EXT. FIELD "PARKING LOT" - OVERHEAD

A brand new tahoe rolls in and barely before it comes to a stop, Penina steps out of the driver's seat, a large gap between her legs and her ground as she covers the distance.

There is an RV parked in the distance

EXT. ASTRO NG THINGS FOR THE GIRLS TO CARRY - COOLERS, DRESS BAGS. THE GIRLS EACH HAVE A FULL SET OF FOAM ROLLER CURLERS IN THEIR HEADS COVERED BY BONNETS.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTDOOR FESTIVAL - LATER THAT AM

Folding chairs form a circle where the Tierney families hang out. In the center Ciara sits on a blanket on the grass while Sheila stands behind her pulling the foam curlers out of her head and tossing each in a plastic grocery bag to her side.

CIARA

OUCH! JESU - JEEZ!

SHEILA

What did you say!

CIARA

I said JEEEE-Z.

Ciara is off to the side stretching- her curlers still intact. Chloe lays on her stomach pretending to read an upside down syllabus

TRISHA TIERNEY

She really needs a wig Sheila- what are you going to keep doing this with the curlers?

Aunt Judy and Nana make a horrified face to one another.

TRISHA TIERNEY

Let's just go take a look -

Trisha leads Sheila, Aunt Judy, Nana and Sheila to a vendor selling big curly wigs and they start trying them on. Tierney holds a big platinum blonde wig next to Ciara's face

FLASH TO:

Penina is tacking a dark brown humungous wig on Francesca's head. Shoving bobbi pins with force into Frankie's head as she winces

CUT TO:

TIERNEY

Now doesn't that look nice!
All the girls overseas are wearing them. And now the girls in her competition will do. Frankie already has one

Frankie looking insane.

Ciara smiles. Sheila is speechless. Aunt Judy picks up a wig and puts it on, she poses as Nana snaps pictures of her with her film camera.

TIERNEY
I'm just saying - it looks nice.
And that's smaller one anyway. It
must be impossible to sleep in
those curlers.

Sheila mouths "she's eight!"

CLOSEUP:

Curls bouncing from Ciara's wig.

CUT TO:

EXT. FESTIVAL- LATER THAT MORNING - IRISH SODA BREAD CONTEST

A long table is filled with 30 different Irish Soda breads - each on a plate with a number in front of them. all looking a bit different, and sliced with butter on each. Jack and 4 other men stand behind the table taking bites of each and tabulating scores with golf pencils on a sheet of paper.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTDOOR HANGOUT AREA

Ciara is dressed already and Sheila is frantically pulling the curlers out of her head. Her head snaps to the side with each pull.

VOICE OVER LOUDSPEAKER
Last call for Girls under 10. First
round is about to begin. We will
start with number... 32.

SHEILA
Shit!

CUT TO:

TIGHT SHOT:

EXT. HANGOUT AREA - CIARA GETS DRESS

An index card with a ribbon tied about Ciara's waist reads
"32"

MADDIE
What did you say?!

Sheila gives her a glare

CUT TO:

Ciara on stage dancing next to a girl who looks straight out of a pageant - big wig and all. Ciara is still in her traditional simple custom (her first dress below).

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - MONTAGE

The Connelly girls in their a simple kilts and white button down shirts, hairy barely curled.

Connelly girls and Tierney school friends in simple Irish dance dresses - just colored embroidery on a plain dress

CUT TO:

INT. OLD SCHOOL FEIS - USED DRESS RACK (FLASHBACK)

Ciara getting a new dress - baby blue velvet with orange and black details and a matching headpiece (a solo dress reserved for higher level dancers)

CUT TO:

INT. FEIS (FLASHBACK)

V.O. MADDIE

But with Riverdance, times were changing. And we had to keep up.

Ciara dancing in a different dress - with sequins - a wig on her head and crystal Tiara

Maddie wearing the hand-me-down baby blue

SMASH CUT:

INT. ROTUNDA BAR - PRESENT DAY

The moms gather around a photo album looking at the same old pictures from the montage

UGLY MAKEUP LADY
Look how young!

TIERNEY
(slurring her words slightly)
So do you girls feels ready?

Ciara and Francesca give each other a look.

TIERNEY
(turning and pointing to Sheila
across the group of people she
proclaims)
She NEEDS the dress. See you
tomorrow.

SHEILA
Its crazy ... I spent 600 on this
one.
Tierney
Well you skimped out and got it
done so basic.. now you have to fix
it. And anyway, most girls upgrade
every yet.

Montage of fancy dresses

Maddie V.O.
The Cadillac of dresses is by Mick
Murray... but they cost over a
thousand dollars. The best girls
have them

CUT TO:

INT. GROUND FLOOR HOLIDAY IN LOBBY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Jack manages all the bags thru the dimly lit lobby and checks
into the hotel.

FADE TO:

INT. HOLIDAY INN HOTEL ROOM - LATE NIGHT

The family is sleeping (all 5 in one room - Chloe across the
bottom of Jack and Sheila's bed).

Ciara sits on the hotel room floor with the desk light on - she is hot gluing craft store rhinestones and sequins to her dress.

CUT TO:

INT. MARRIOTT BALLROOM - COMPETITION DAY

The ballroom is full. Girls buzz, warming up, fluttering their feet. Penina has a whole row reserved - a different personal item on each chair in the full ballroom. She waves ppl off as they inquire.

CUT TO:

INT. BALLROOM CORRIDOR HALLWAY

Ciara is getting herself ready. With bloomers and a sports bra on, she sits on the carpeted floor and pulls on her poodle socks. They come up her calves just a few inches below her knees. She folds each over from the top just a few inches and makes a ring around her leg with a clear sticky substance. The bottle reads "body adhesive"

Sheila hands her a gilly that she has just finished touching up with black shoe polish.

Ciara loosens the laces and puts it on her right foot, starting at the toe she tightens the straps - so tight that you can see the width of her foot narrow dramatically with each pull. She wraps the long laces around the arch of her foot and up her ankle.

She repeats with the left.

Still on the ground, she points and flexes her foot - before untying the shoe and doing the process again...but tighter.

She stands up and jumping so high, she kicks her butt 10x so sharp it looks like it might leave a bruise.

The curls from her wig bounce straight up and down.

CIARA

(touching the side of her head - to Sheila)

Its loose here

Sheila shoves a few more bobbi pins in to secure it. An extra for the crystal tiara she wears at the top of her head.

Ciara jumps again. Then kicks each leg a few times.

CIARA

Yeah thats good. Thanks ma

She takes a deep breath. She does un ugly big smile and Sheila puts vaseline on her teeth.

Her dress is laid out on the floor - Orange and baby blue - it still has velvet on it which is now quite out of style. The rhinestones she glued on last night reflect in the light.

Sheila picks up the dress, unzips the back and holds it open so Ciara can step in. As Sheila zips it back up, Ciara sucks in - it is so tight on her now bigger boobs and stomach, she can barely breath. And definitely can't lift her arms over her head if she tried.

CIARA

(doing a breathing exercise)

Its so hot in here

All around her in the hallway girls are in different stages of warming up and getting dressed in similar routines.

Some add more (unneeded eye shadow)

With her hands on her hips, Ciara bounces up and down on her toes again - and now the butt kicks - clearly harder to do with a stiff paneled dress covering her thighs.

CUT TO:

INT. BALLROOM:

Sound up: bell dings

JUDGE

Quiet in the hall please

A sweeping shh comes over the room.

Ciara and Francesca are sitting in the audience chairs with their parents touching up their lipstick.

CIARA

Do you want to go up?

They make their way side stage where about 100 girls are lined up fully dressed with their numbers printed on index cards and tied around their waists with string.

The competition stage is lifted off four feet from the ground. There are four steps leading up and a long judges table sits 4 judges face the stage.

ANNOUNCER AT THE PODIUM SIDE STAGE
 We are going to begin ladies under
 16. The first round will commence
 with number 132. And the second
 with number 41.

Three live musicians (the hot trio from the lobby) - an
 accordion, a keyboard and a fiddle tune their instruments
 side stage into a microphone.

Competitor 132 walks to the stage. She stops stops to tell
 the musicians her tempo. She stalls googly eyed. They have to
 tell her to keep it moving.

CIARA
 I do like Oona's new dress

FRANCESCA
 It's a Mick Murray. I heard it cost
 1800 dollars.

ANNOUNCER
 Competitor 132 and 133

Two girls walk on stage. The hall is so silent you can hear a
 pin drop. They take their place - one stage left and one
 stage right stage

Sound up: live reel music

A four count passes before they take off dancing different
 steps to the same music.

30 seconds of super high energy dancing. Kicks, beats,
 dresses fly up, wigs bounce.

Everyone in the hall watches on.

Each time the music starts, the girls waiting side stage use
 their hands to practice their steps - subtly making motions
 near down by their stomachs.

Penina is taking notes in her syllabus.

V.O. MADDIE
 OH! And here's the other thing -
 your arms... stay by your side.
 Stick straight.

(MORE)

SHEILA (CONT'D)

I don't know where they got off in Riverdance... but that is a major point deduction

Girl on stage leaps and her iron straight arms moves 6 inches away from her side

V.O. MADDIE

Right there - 2 points ... not good.

Video of the girls practicing with their arms wrapped around their sides like mummies

V.O. MADDIE

The story is that during Ireland's time under British rule, they danced in their homes with arms by their side to avoid detection. Other people say it was an act of defiance - when they were forced to dance for Queen Elizabeth who started the plantations in Ireland. Their stiff arms showed her that they did not like this one bit - and were in fact quite miserable to be performing for her...

Archive video of the girls practicing with a stone in their fists

CUT TO:

INT. COMPETITION BALLROOM - PRESENT TIME

Jack, Maddie and Chloe arrive. Jack holding a plastic bag with a croissant from 7/11 and a big gulp. They find Sheila and Penina in the open row.

Megan is sitting crossed legged on the floor close to the stage.

Jack makes his way side stage motioning to Ciara.

JACK

(mouthing)

Give 'em hell kiddo

He holds up the pastry bag

Ciara waves him off with embarrassment

CUT TO WIDE
SHOT:

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM CORRIDOR - CROWDED - CONTINUOUS

Tierney pushes her way thru. Disheveled and late. She waits in the back of the room until the girls stop dancing and take a bow, when there is a break in the movement.

She waves to Ciara and Francesca before sitting down next to Sheila and Penina.

There is not an empty chair so she shoves her ass on the same seat making the 3 of them share 2 seats.

MONTAGE of music and dancing: GET A FEEL OF THE STYLE; LOTS OF DANCE SHOTS OF THE COMPETITION

CUT TO:

INT. COMPETITION STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

A dancing girl suddenly runs over to side stage and hurls off stage.

There is a horrified sound let out by the entire room.

DING. DING. DING.

The music comes to a screeching halt.

ANNOUNCER
Ladies, ladies. Quiet please.

Noise continues

ANNOUNCER
I said QUIET. PLEASE. Let's break
and take a moment to clear the
stage.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR:

Francesca, Ciara and Megan join a line of girls waiting to fill their water bottles from a carafe of water. The line is long.

DING. DING. DING. In the distance

MEGAN
Guys forget it - I think your group
is starting again.

EXT. SHOT - INT. COMPETITION BALLROOM #1

CUT TO TIGHT
SHOT

MAIN COMPETITION STAGE - BALLROOM #1

Ciara is dancing her soft shoe. The girl on stage with her head stops runs off and makes it to a garbage can before puking.

CUT TO:

BALLROOM #2

Another age group competition is underway

A girl dead stops and sits down on stage

CUT TO:

COMPETITION BALLROOM #3

A girl pukes over into the judges table.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM CORRIDOR

Sheamus O'Donnelly is frantically being wheeled thru the hallway barking orders

UGLY MAKEUP LADY

What is happening?!

LAURA MARTIN

Maybe a bug?

All the dance moms look at each other in disbelief.

A mom in the corner is crying trying to clean vomit from the 1800 dollar costume. Her daughter is in her bloomers in the fetal position crying next to her.

CUT TO:

INT. COMPETITION BALLROOM - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

ANNOUNCER

And now for the recalls for ladies
under 16.

Ciara and Francesca sit clutching their numbers that read 24 and 119.

ANNOUNCER
 Competitor #3... competitor #16

 #24.....#119.

The numbers keep getting called - half of the competition will be recalled back to perform their set dance.

Oona doesn't even wait in the room to hear the recalls - she is out in the call with Kerri practicing her steps.

TIERNEY
 (to the girls)
 Let's go over your sets - keep your shoes on but let's go down to the lobby

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL LOBBY HALLWAY

Tierney has the girls practicing in their hard shoes on the marble floor of the lobby. They are at the end of a hallway where the exterior door is cracked open - She is smoking a cig and holding what looks like white wine in a plastic cup.

TIERNEY
 (standing in front of Ciara)
 I want to hear that clearer - and
 dun, dun , dun.. DUN
 CIARA
 I'm holding back because its like
 an ice skating rink

Tierney grabs her shoulders as if that would save her from falling.

Ciara understands what she means and repeats the treble.

As Tierney is holding Ciara's shoulder - cig still in her right hand, she catches a glimpse of a low hanging curl on her wig that has caught flame --- her eyes bug out.

Frankie is watching what is going on. Another curl is not engulfed - Frankie sees a fire extinguisher to her left.

Tierney says no with her eyes.

She then swings her left hand around Ciara's back - when Ciara feels the heat

CIARA
 OMG!

She is freaking out - shaking her head but its making it worse and catching the other girls.

Finallay Tierney takes her plastic cup of white wine

and dunks the bouncy girl in the white wine - it extinguishes and as she pulls the cup away - Ciara's curl hangs wet dripping white wine slowly ... as it hits her bare legs... specs of spray tan disappear.

CUT TO:

INT. CROWDED BATHROOM

Tierney holds Ciara's head under the hand dryer - drying the charred fake hair

She then takes a little nail scissor and starts snipping off what is black and charred from the wig. It hangs uneven in the back.

TIERNEY
Back to new!

CUT TO:

INT. BALLROOM ROOM #1

They dance their set pieces.

Several girls have dropped out as no one takes the stage when certain numbers are called.

CUT TO:

INT. COMPETITION BALLROOM TRANSFORMED INTO AWARDS ROOM -
LATER THAT NIGHT

Sfx: live music - lively reel plays

The room is absolutely packed. The parents are drinking wine and beer out of plastic cups. Girls mill with anxious energy.

CUT TO:

INT. BALLROOM STAGE

A woman arranges big Waterford crystal bowls in front of a 3 prong podium.

A clap to the beat of the lively reel breaks out across the ballroom.

ANNOUNCER
We are going to begin with ladies
under 16 results

A cheer breaks out as girls start throwing on their dresses over their nike shorts and sports bras. They head up to the stage.

Tierney stands on a chair so she can see the girls better. She is tipsy and has a red wine stain on the leg of her white suit.

ANNOUNCER
First of all ladies - you all did
an incredible job today. Some
better than others though so we are
going to ask our top 10 to come
forward. These 10 dancers will
qualify to compete in the Nationals
in Orlando. Shall we?

Penina is locked in with her syllabus ready to highlight.

ANNOUNCER
I'll ask Sheamus to do the honors.

Sheamus is now hoisted on stage in his wheelchair by two strong young male dancers. He takes a folded piece of paper and the mic.

SHEAMUS
51...

Number 51 comes forward to start to make up a line at the top of the stage.

SHEAMUS
38...
52...
139...

Number 139 is so excited and joins the line

SHEAMUS
Oh. I'm so sorry dear. That is a
7.. not you. 137. Easy mistake.

She walks back to the group cowardly.

SHEAMUS
Twenty... ffff... twenty five.

Sheila sighs

SHEAMUS
And 24...

The Tierney School yells out - Ciara qualifies

ANNOUNCER
PLEASE! No cheering until all the
competitors have been announced.

Sheila holds her hand to her face - a huge smile grinning
thru. She makes a thumbs up to Ciara who is sparkling on
stage and touches one of the glued on rhinestones.

Sheamus announces the rest of the numbers. Then starts
backwards with

In 64th place... from the O'Donnell
School... competitor
SHEAMUS

QUICK WHIP OF GIRLS IN VARIOUS COSTUMES GETTING THEIR MEDALS.

SHEAMUS
In 22nd.. Competitor 119

Francesca looks pissed and takes her medal.

CUT TO:

INT. BALLROOM STAGE

Top ten are ready to announced. The family is on pins and
needles excited with every number called that is not Ciara's
until they get to fourth place and she is called.

She stands awkwardly to the side of the podium - the clear
difference in the simplicity of her dress vs. the girls on
the podium.

CUT TO:

INT. ROTUNDA BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Sound up: Wild Rover playing on guitars

The trio of musicians come over to join in.

The Tierney parents are gathered around - drinking and
laughing. Sheila and another dad (Mick Martin) strum Irish
drinking songs on their acoustic guitars while the others
sing along and dance.

Francesca is slumped over in a chair. She is reading her
scores - a complex page of numbers and tabulations.

FRANCESCA
 Its rigged anyway.. maybe they felt
 bad about your dress

Ciara looks off to the side - she sees her mom so happy, and
 her sisters dancing a two-hand to Wild Rover

CIARA
 I guess so Francesca.

Sound Up: Rattlin Bog plays by the trio of musicians

Everyone tries to sing the words, clapping and laughing in a
 circle

They laugh, they dance - they have their own Irish session in
 that Philadelphia hotel lobby late into the night.

INT. CONNELLY HOUSE - DAYS LATER

Sheila is cooking Mac and Cheese over the counter. Ciara is
 behind her shuffling in bare feet on the kitchen floor. Their
 conversation continues over the beats as if they are not
 happening.

SHEILA:
 So I think we will figure out how
 to get you that dress.. what do you
 think?

CIARA:
 Its too much mom.

Sheila stirs the pot of mac and cheese

SHEILA:
 Ready!
 This is your year my princess. All
 I ever wanted was to be your mom. I
 promised myself I would never let
 you down. We will figure it out.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE YARD

Jack is carrying large piece of wood from his truck to the
 back deck. Sheila sees him out the kitchen window

SHEILA

(MORE)

SHEILA (CONT'D)
 What do you have now garbage
 picker?!

Jack starts to lay out the pieces of wood into a square - a proper practice stage. He looks proud.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The carpets are rolled up and couches moved to the side to reveal the hard wood floor. There are scuffs all over it from Ciara tapping in her hard shoes. A full length bedroom mirror - just something flimsy from Target - is laid on its side against the wood burning stove so Ciara can see her feet in the mirror as she glides across the floor. She walks over to see what Jack is doing.

EXT. DECK - CONTINUOUS

Delighted she starts dancing on the new wood layout. Jack is positioning an old mirror against the house facing the "dance floor"

JACK
 (looking at Sheila who is standing
 in the frame of the sliding door -
 dinner set on the table behind her)
 Not a bad day for the garbage
 picker, ay?

Sheila shakes her head and smiles gently before heading back inside.

SHEILA
 CHLOE, CIARA! DINNER!
 Sorry - Maddie, Ciara!

CUT TO:

CONNELLY KITCHEN TABLE - MINUTES LATER

Whole family sitting down eating mac and cheese and hot dogs wrapped in pieces of wonderbread. Glasses of whole milk for the girls

MADDIE:
 Maybe we could rent out the dog?
 Like a puppy for hire for kids who
 aren't allowed to get one.

The old fat beagle sits on the floor besides the table.

JACK
 (laughs)
 Maisy is not a puppy
 CHLOE:
 I can sell my bracelets
 CIARA:
 I will keep working at the ice
 cream store - I can do my homework
 ... its not busy in the winter
 SHEILA:
 We will make it work. We always do.
 You are princess #1. Princess Ciara
 Well technically the Irish princess
 ciara is with a K but you know
 JACK:
 Your mom was on a lot of meds and I
 don't know folklore. What are you
 guys doing tomorrow? The water
 thing right?
 MADDIE:
 (theatrically)
 Its a world record - the most Irish
 dancers doing the same steps while
 on water

CIARA:
 Sheamus has us on a barge on the
 Hudson river

Everyone is laughing.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALONG THE HUDSON RIVER - NYC AS THE BACKDROP

Its drizzling. Girls are huddled together, freezing as they
 drape blankets and big coats over their black tights and
 leotards resembling Riverdance.

Every school in the area is there - and the familiar faces
 from the Regionals too.

Sheamus is being pushed around directing the parties -
 including Martha the reporter who is going to take this stunt
 live on air.

PRODUCER
 (in a megaphone to the girls)
 We are live in 10 so we are going
 to get on the barge shortly.
 Let's rehearse on land one last
 time...

The girls make several long straight lines and dance a beat that mimics a Riverdance number

They dance.

FRANKIE

(referencing the girl in front of her and rolling her eyes)
I don't know why I am behind her - she keeps clipping me with her heel

PRODUCER

Ok ladies! On the barge.

They all move to the barge tip toeing carefully around each other. They are jam packing on this rectangle floating over the Hudson. A crew man release the string that ties it to the dock so it floats out to appear like the platform is completely floating in the river.

MADDIE

(to Ciara next to her)
They do Riverdance is not actually performed on a River right?

PRODUCER:

We are live in 3, 2...

Martha:

Sheamus, a pleasure to see you again. What a stunt! 200 dancers in the middle of the river - talk about a river dance! HA!

SHEAMUS:

Yes that's right I am so proud - and now... girls...One and two and off you go....

Sound up: live music (from the hot musical trio who get to stay on dry land)

The girls begin to shuffle... suddenly the back corner of the barge looks like it is sinking

CLOSE UP:

EXT. BARGE

Frankie trips but catches herself

The barge looks balanced again

Then.. the girl behind her lifts her foot a bit too high clipping frankie from the back. She falls backwards and the whole cluster of girls falls into the river.

Sound Up: whistles, alarms go off

Men jump into the water with a boat

PRODUCER:

Don't cut! Keep going girls - CLOSE

UP ON THIS SIDE!!!!

(its Ciara)

She smiles through fear and total disbelief.

PRODUCER:

AND CUT!

Sheamus is clapping loudly looking for his camera shot.

FADE TO:

EXT. RIVERWALK

At this point Frankie and the other girls are bundling in the Coast Guards heat blankets. penina is throwing a fit.

SHEAMUS

(as he wheels by Frankie)

Two left feet do we?

Ciara and Maddie giggle - then stop before they get themselves in trouble.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVERWALK PARKING LOT

Penina is talking to Martha by the news truck.

FADE TO:

INT. CONNELLY HOUSE - IN FRONT OF COMPUTER - LATER THAT NIGHT

Sheila opens an email.

(TEXT)

Greetings Tierney families! Today got me thinking... how fun by the way... so we got a little wet, everyone is OK.

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

Riverdance started as a drama and as many of you know, we can enter the dance drama competition at Nationals without prequalification! This means we could all compete and also be there to support Ciara. I have hired xx to concept a drama for us - she will fly in from Kilkenny and hold try-outs next week. The fee is 200. See you on the podium!

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

There are pictures pasted in the email showing examples of dance dramas. Another photo is captioned "The original Riverdance"

Sheila's phone pings - it is a text from Tierney

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

I know it's a lot but this will give the other girls a chance - and I need your girls to win. Thanks Sheil.

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

And don't worry about the cost...

CUT TO:

INT. CONNELLY KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING SAINT PATRICK'S DAY

Flour is smeared across the kitchen table. There are empty bread pains piled in the sink. Sheila leans into the oven and pulls out an Irish soda bread protecting her hand with a dish towel that trails the bottom of the oven as she pulls the pan out.

On a strip of the kitchen table that has been wiped down, 5 breads are lined up wrapped in cellophane with big green bows.

Sfx: thud of a heavy metal pan hitting the kitchen table.

She tosses the dish towel over the back of a wooden kitchen chair.

Sound in distance: arguing over whose shirt it is

SHEILA:

Girls! Let's go! And its Maddie's shirt...

Ciara and Maddie scuttle into the kitchen - Sheila's back is to the table

CIARA:
OH MY GOD! Mom!

The chair with the dish towel is up in flames. She grabs another towel and starts swatting - then turns to the sink to fill a dirty soda bread pan (still coated in flour) with water and tosses the now milky water on the chair.

Without incident she grabs the breads and hands them to the girls

The top rung of the chair is completely charred

SHEILA:
OK I will see you 3rd period. Mr. McGrade wants to do everything in the Cafeteria this year.

Maddie rolls her eyes.

On the small TV in the Kitchen - The Foglers Coffee "A Dancer's Morning plays" in the background

Maddie
(the only one that catches the TV - to herself says)
The outsiders really love it don't yet

Saddled with heavy backpacks, soda breads and gym bags they head out thru the back door thru a fence that leads to the parallel street

Sfx: break exhaust of a school bus

Bus is at the corner. They run.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL BUS DROP OFF:

SUKIE
(she has a brooklyn NY accent - though she was raised right here in central jersey, and a raspy voice)
Connelly Christmas!!! I can't wait Maddie! Did your mom make the bread?! I wonder if John is gonna wear a kilt again.

Sukie is an obviously Jewish looking girl who has painted a green shamrock on her cheek for the occasion.

As the other kids filing off the bus are olive skinned with dark hair.

Montage of kids getting off the bus.

GIRL WEARING JEWISH STAR AROUND HER NECK

GUIDO KID WITH HIS HAIR GELLED

GIRLS WEARING SWEATPANTS THAT SAY "ITALIANO" ACROSS THE BUTT.

(V.O. MADDIE)

You see.. we live in an incredibly Italian town in jersey... Saint Patrick's Day is the one day where my so called secret hobby comes to light. And the other kids in school get to gawk at us like zoo animals. When I was little I used to wish I was born Italian - with skin than tanned in the jersey sun rather than burnt to a crisp. I hated my freckles... just specks on what could be beautifully clear skin...I couldn't wait until I was old enough to wear foundation that gave my skin a smooth finish like the rest of my classmates. I wanted to be like everyone else.. still do.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA

Sfx: class period bell

Ciara and Maddie lay their dresses out in the buffet line of the caf. Kitchen closed off by folding panel doors from the main space. They are getting dresses and talking over what steps to do.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA

Kids fill the room and take their seats.

GUIDO BOY FROM EARLIER
 Mr. McGrade! Are you gonna ask us
 to perform for Saint Joseph's day?!

The kid starts doing a weird mix between a fist pump and a breakdance.

A gaggle of girls in juicy velour sweatsuits whisper amongst themselves at a table. They are peering through the open sliver of the door where Ciara and Maddie are changing.

She's pissed that they are still doing this - nothing has changed since they performed 3 hand reels in elementary school - FLASHBACK VIDEO

And she's had enough of this shit

She slides out the side door and into the bathroom across the hall.

INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM WITH PINK TILE

Maddie leans her elbows on the counter and looks into the mirror with her head in her hands (mirroring the position Sheila took at start of the film)

CUT TO:

CLOSEUP FEET UNDER BATHROOM STALL

A member of the juicy velour crew is waiting in a stall watching Maddie through the crack

MADDIE
 (aloud to herself)
 Couldn't have just stuck with
 ballet now, could we!

The girl in the bathroom quietly giggles

Maddie realizes she is not alone and rests her side against the stall door, squinted her eye thru the tiny sliver in the frame and listening for the other girl to secure herself in her stall.

She takes a deep sigh before swiftly heading out of the stall and grabs the door handle. She's out. When she nearly runs into the school principal

MR. MCDONOUGH
 Why of course! Hi Ciara! Its
 Connelly Christmas

Maddie smiles. Its not worth the correction. This has happened her whole life. Second in line, but also second best. When your sister is #1 at most things, the chances of you being that too are slim... so you ride the wave where you can... you try .. but you also allow some space because even if you were #2 you'd be a let down... so falling right in the middle where you can slip into invisibility isn't the worst thing. Its safe. And Maddie truly believes that principal doesn't know her name. Ciara's little sister. "Little Con" as the boys in school lovingly refer to her.

MR. McDONOUGH
I can't miss this!

He follows her back into the caf.

CUT TO:

INT. CAFITORIUM STAGE

Ciara and Maddie dance. A girl in front of the stage snaps a photo for the school newspaper.

They mingle with classmates
JUICY SWEATSUIT GIRL #1 (from the
bathroom)
That was like pretty cool Mad.

She brings the group in a circle around Maddie.
JUICY SWEATSUIT GIRL #2
I didn't realize you were good too.
ANOTHER GIRL
So cool

Sukie finds Maddie and they laugh

CUT TO:

EXT. CONNELLY HOUSE - AFTER SCHOOL

Ciara and Maddie arrive home and pass Sheila who is loading the van, holding a box of pastries and a 711 large coffee in her hand.

SHEILA:
Be quick girls

Chloe is already in the backseat. Ciara jumps in the passenger seat and plays B*Wtched on the stereo

MADDIE
I don't want to dance anymore
today. Please.

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

SHEILA:

Don't you remember? This is where Uncle Chris used to live. It is special to them.

MADDIE:

Yeah, I remember. But they won't tomorrow.

SHEILA:

And you might not either if you don't knock it off.

EXT. SHOT THRU THE VAN WINDSHIELD - MINUTES LATER

MADDIE:

Well I actually don't feel that great.

SHEILA:

You are not sick. You know who is sick? These old people. And this might be their last St. Patrick's Day. They sit home all day eating jello, how does that sound.

MADDIE

Not too bad ...

She smirks. Sheila glares.

The van pulls into the parking lot. Sheila retrieves a karaoke machine from the trunk. The girls slug their bags over their shoulders and the ensemble heads thru an automatic glass door.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSING HOME COMMON ROOM

Residents are lined up - a mix of wheelchairs and chairs. One guy lays in a hospital bed stretched out in the back of the room. He is in a coma. A nursing home worker is keeping everyone occupied before the big show.

NURSING HOME WORKER:

B12!

A quarter of the residents appear to be following along.

Another worker greets the girls

WORKER #2:

Girls, we are so happy you are here! Do you need somewhere to change?! Oh I just saw Riverdance last week with my daughter!

SHEILA:

Oh no, WE, are so happy to be here.

She hits Maddie who fakes a smile.

The nurse leads them to a kitchenette adjoined to the common room. It is one of those tiny ones with a cut-out in the wall for serving food. She tries to pull down the paneling to cover the opening but it gets stuck so they have to huddle down to change beneath the square opening so they are not exposed.

Sheila moves to the front of the room to get the Karaoke machine set up. She walks back to the kitchenette.

SHEILA

They are getting antsy...

MADDIE

Why, do they have big plans tonight? They going somewhere?

The girls follow Sheila back out to the floor.

Sheila talks into the mic.

SHEILA

Hello everyone and happy Saint Patrick's Day! These are my 3 girls Ciara is going to perform a reel for you now.

Sheila hits play on the boombox

Sfx: Rap song starts to play

Everyone looks confused.

Sheila motions Ciara to dance anyway. Motioning to "just go with the beat"

OLD LADY

I love this song - my grandson showed me

OLD LADY #2

WHAT?! What do you mean - this isn't what we used to dance to

The workers give each other an "ohhhh" look

SHEILA:

(into the mic)

Ciara is currently a 9th grader at Waveview High where she is the class president, #1 in her class academically and just qualified to compete in the Nationals in Orlando.

A woman in the back is tries to make an escape. A nurse catches her and steers her back to the show.

SHEILA

Ciara placed 4th! at the regionals
this year!

Sound up: A disappointed sigh

SHEILA

NO! That's good that's quite good!

They clap.

Ciara takes a bow.

Sheila hits next on the stereo.

Another pop song starts to play.

Maddie starts to dance.

She adds her arms.

Then she starts doing a non Irish dance routine mixing some of her steps with modern dance choreography

Soon the old people are joining in as they can - swaying their bodies and throwing up their arms.

Maddie looks back at Sheila. Sheila throws her hands in the air giving up and laughs.

Sheila joins

The workers join

Ciara and Chloe join.

It is a total hit.

CUT TO:

EXT. NURSING HOME PARKING LOT

Walking to the car the Connellys are in stitches recapping what just happened.

Maddie

I don't think that betty white
looking woman had moved her hips
like that since the 70s

All laughing.

CIARA:

(laughing sarcastically)

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)
 Truly Maddie what is wrong with
 you?

Maddie starts to do the dance as she walks to the car. Chloe
 is copying behind her.

SHEILA:
 I always said you should be an
 actress...

MADDIE:
 Well on that note...Should we get
 something to eat?

CUT TO:

INT. DARK PUB - JOHNNY MACS - LATER THAT EVENING

Every inch of the walls are covered in Memorabilia. There are
 photos of every famous Irish person like a drycleaner- Matt
 Damon, Ben Affleck, Michael Flatley.

The Connellys slide into a booth.

CIARA:
 Its cool in here
 SHEILA:
 Finally somewhere in town we can
 eat our own people's food - not one
 more pizzeria
 CHLOE:
 (reading the menu)
 They have pizza
 MADDIE:
 Our people don't really have "food"
 Boiled potatoes and cabbage
 shouldn't count
 SHEILA:
 Shepard's pie... potato soup...
 stew... cabbage
 MADDIE:
 Yeah I would choose pizza
 CIARA:
 Or a chicken parm
 MADDIE:
 Yeah... zeppole ... pasta
 SHEILA:
 Coddle
 THE GIRLS TALKING OVER EACH OTHER:
 (laughing in british accents and
 Irish brogues)
 Ohhhhh coddle! Of course coddle!

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)
 We love cuddle! Cuddle cuddly
 wuddle mush!

When an older Irish looking man with a lean figure and kind face approaches (Johnny Mac)

JOHNNY MAC

And what do we have here?

SHEILA

Hi.. I'm Sheila. We are thankful
 you're here.

A long stare and pause. He looks the oldest up and down.

Ciara grabs her head.

CIARA:

OMG I forgot we had them on

She looks around to make sure she doesn't know anyone here.

SHEILA:

They are Irish Step dancers.

JOHNNY MAC

Ah right! Well in that case, you're
 in the right place.

Sfx: bar scene - music and plates clashing

The Connellys eat their meal. Johnny joins them - they are chatting indistinctly.

The rest of the pub is bustling - its Saint Patrick's Day after all and the only Irish place in town

As the Connelly's head out the door, Johnny stops them.

JOHNNY

Hey... we do an Irish Brunch on
 Sundays and I could use a dancer.
 You let me know if you ever want to
 come by.

SHEILA

So kind.

JOHNNY MAC

(to Sheila)

And I'm always happy to know a good
 Kerry woman

As they are walking out - Maddie turns to the family

MADDIE:

I mean... we did say I dance too
 right?

CIARA:

Oh sure - you dance too - you wanna
 work for me?

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

MADDIE:

I mean I could make my own money
too

CIARA:

Oh yeah, hard no we are not
splitting that hat

SHEILA:

My girls are not dancing at a bar.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELKS LODGE

Tierney dancers and their families are loading up a coach
bus.

TIERNEY:

Let's go my little diddly dees. It
starts at 1PM!

Tierney is instructing the driver.

Girls load the bus and we see one holding ticket to
"Riverdance Off-Broadway" in Philadelphia.

CUT TO:

INT. COACH BUS

The driver's teenage son is playing with his gameboy in the
front seat. The girls are reading magazines and making
bracelets.

UGLY MAKEUP LADY

(whispering)

Sheila... I heard you are trying to
save for a dress

SHEILA:

Yeah its tough but she needs it. I
have to be able to do this for her

UGLY MAKEUP LADY:

Well listen... I do some catering
on the weekends. Its cash. Its for
fancy events -Geraldo Rivera's
house last week in Rumson - you
know the deal. Its hard work, I'm
exhausted when I come home but the
money is worth it. I can set you up
with my boss.

SHEILA:

Wow thank you - (she blanks on her
name because they only refer to her
as ugly makeup lady)... thank you.
That would be great.

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

UML:

(in her ear)

He likes pretty women

SHEILA:

Ah, well I can see why he chose you
then

EXT. BUS WINDSHIELD

Pouring rain.

INT. BUS

Tierney is crotched down in the aisle next to the driver.

TIERNEY

That was the exit.

Which

That one

Driver makes a sudden swerve off the highway - the girls fly
from their seats

DRIVER

I'll pull off here

Large coach bus is barreling down a narrow suburban street.
There is no clear place to turn around.

The driver suddenly takes a hard left into a driveway but the
width of the bus is bigger than the pavement and the wheels
sink into the muddy grass.

The driver presses on the gas but the wheels just spin
kicking up mud.

DRIVER

Oh shit.

TIERNEY

Oh shit is right! Are you paying
for these girls to see Michael
Flatley on Broadway? Cause we
managed the Philly tickets at 30%
off and if we don't get there in 30
minutes there is going to be an
issue.

Tierney and the driver get out of the car - they are standing in the pouring rain. Tierney's stilettos sink into the lawn... the bottom of her white pants stained. They look to see that what must be the toilet release is leaking out...

TIERNEY:

Oh, and literal. shit.

The moms are looking up towards the confrontation and out the window at the situation.

CUT TO:

EXT. MUDDY FRONT LAWN

The dance moms are out in the rain arranged around the back of the bus trying to push it out of the mud plots.

TIERNEY

Ready, 1, and 2, and **off you go!**

Wheels spin in the mud.

Mud spews up and they are covered. There is no way this is possible

INT. BUS

GIRL

Finn you should help - you're a guy

FINN

Today, I'm just a kid.

But then the bus lurks out and onto the street. Its rolling... the girls inside and screaming ... the driver (who is fat) waddle jogs to catch the bus and throws herself thru the door and up the stairs. The moms run behind. Her son is still playing his gameboy.

CUT TO:

INT. FEDERICO'S PIZZERIA - NEXT DAY

Ciara, Finley, Francesca, Megan and Maddie peer into the glass cases

MEGAN

I'll do a slice of white and one Sicilian please

(she winks at Frankie)

The pizza man slides the two slices into the oven to warm them.

FRANCESCA
OMG LOOK!

She points up to the TV that shows Martha the news reporter doing a story on "E-COLI OUTBREAK AT MARRIOTT THWARTS DANCE COMPETITION"

The second line says "cause by contaminated water"

The girls giggle - OMG!

MADDIE
What do you guys think about the
drama

CIARA
(pointing at Martha on the TV)
Are we this woman's new beat?

They all discuss.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The girls walk back to the Elks Lodge holding pizza boxes.

MADDIE:
(Twirling and goofing)
OK so what about our imported
DRAMMMMA teacher

FRANCESCA:
I heard she had Jean Butler's role
and got edged out...

CIARA:
No.. she was Jean's teacher

MADDIE:
That timeline doesn't make sense.
She had an affair with Michael
Flatley

MEGAN:
(to Maddie)
Who said that?

CIARA

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

I'm worried I'm not going to have even time to practice for my solo Mrs. Tierney is already forgetting about me

Maddie shrugs and winks at Megan

FINLEY

Ciara... who's your daddy? C'mon on now ... I got you.

MEGAN

Please Finn - last warning on the whole daddy thing.

They all laugh. He's right. He will be training Ciara for the Nationals - their own little team. The two of them against the world.

CUT TO:

INT. ELKS LODGE

Claire is an intimidating figure. She is standing in the center of the room. She looks legit.

CLAIRE

Ladies. Nice of you to show up. Pizza in class?

She points to the garbage can.

The girls stand up straight, walk to the can and reluctantly throw away their dinner.

CLAIRE:

Alright now! In a line, let's move it. I want leaps around the room.

Music starts.

The girls leap in a circle.

Now 100 kicks. faster. Are you here for fun or are you here to win?

(V.O.) Maddie

If I had to imagine what the Kerri school was like. This would be it.

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)
 But this what certainly not what we
 were used to

TIME CUT:

FLASHBACK - INT. ELKS LODGE

The girls sprawled out on the floor doing homework before their turns. Mrs. Tierney smoking a cig. Megan ordering a diet coke in the smokey adjoined bar.

(V.O.) Maddie
 The Tierney school was yes - a mediocre dance school but it also served as Mrs. Tierney escape from her husband - a place to abuse her vices - and now we were in for a rude awakening.

FLASHBACK - INT. HIGHSCHOOL CLASSROOM

Megan is drinking water out of the plastic bud light cup from the bar.

TEACHER:
 Megan why do you have that
 MEGAN:
 Oh sorry was in my car - its just from the bar I dance at.

Everyone gives her a look.

She reconsiders. Then decides
 MEGAN
 Yeah.. the bar I dance at.

CUT TO:

INT ELKS LODGE - BACK TO PRESENT DAY

Terrible dancing.

With the addition of non-champion dancers - this try-out is a mess.

Megan, Ciara, Maddie, Frankie, Finley and Chloe watch from the side at the debacle.

CLAIRE
 Ok that's enough for today.
 (MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)
 (under her breath)
 I can't handle much more.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELKS LODGE

Jack is waiting outside in the box truck.

Maddie huffs seeing it is Jack in the truck picking them up. She looks around to see if there are any other dancers in sight and then makes a run for the truck hoping no one will see her.

But Ciara and Chloe are santuring so that's a lost cause anyway.

The girls climb in the front passenger door. Maddie slides in to sit on a milk crate turned over and placed in between the front seats. She ducks her head between her legs. Ciara sits in the passenger seat. The truck is littered with snack wrappers and old big gulp cups.

Sfx: the truck is loud; Jack tunes classic rock music

Ciara pulls out a notebook from her bag, turning on the car light and starts to do algebra homework

Sfx: every bump in the road makes the truck creek

FADE IN:

EXT. CONNELLY HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Sheila arrives home in her penguin outfit carrying plates wrapped in tinfoil. The girls should already be asleep.

Sound up: crinkling of tinfoil, opening of fridge door

Maddie hears and makes her way to the kitchen.

MADDIE:
 (taking a seat at the table)
 How was it?

Sheila loosens her neck tie and takes it off. She sits down bringing the plates to the table

SHEILA
 Well... it was at Geraldo Rivera's house...finally. all the women were so chic...

Maddie listens intently, her eyes big with her own dreams. She starts to unwrap each package inspecting the goods

SHEILA

Its filet mignon - and that's mini quiche

She is taste testing.

MADDIE:

Do you ever think its skips a generation?

SHEILA:

(biting a piece of something and sliding into the seat across from Maddie)

What does?

MADDIE:

Well, don't take this the wrong way... but you always talk about how Grandma grew up during the depression. But then she was wearing fur and a woman about the town - sounds like someone who might have been at the party tonight...

And your dad... NASA...

And well... me and Ciara try so hard have something better and I just wonder...

A long pause.

SHEILA:

(crushed but hiding)

Yeah Mad. Maybe that's it...

FADE TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

QUICK SHOTS INT. CONNELLY HOUSE

Sound up: Emotional song like Landslide by Fleetwood Mac

INT. SHEILA BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dressed in a penguin waiter's outfit, Sheila counts an envelope of cash and tucks it into her top dresser drawer. She wipes quiet tears from her eyes.

CLOSEUP: SHEILA'S FACE IN THE SHADOWS OF THE NIGHT

She is so worried. She looks down again at the drawer. Then up into the mirror. She gathers herself and quietly walks into the hallway where she sees Ciara on her bed in the small sliver of the door cracked open. She stands at just watches, starts crying again.

INT. CIARA BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ciara sits Indian style on her bed. There is a vision board collage next to her with pictures from ID magazine. A job search board is open on craigslist on her desktop computer.

EXT. BACKYARD SHED - CONTINUOUS

The dog whimpers outside of the shed.

INT DARK SHED - CONTINUOUS

Jack grabs his super big gulp cup and then the leash from the ground and emerges in the dark night... he walks the dog out the back gate towards the street.

EXT. TIERNEY'S MCMANSION DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Tierney reaches in the console of her jeep Cherokee - the windows are down but her coat is on and you can see her breath in the cold night, she swishes mouthwash before spitting it into her driveway. Then pops a Listerine strip, 2 altoids and two squirts of fresh breath before spritzing herself with perfume.

There is a pack of Malboro reds in her console.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. ELKS LODGE - NEXT DAY

Girls fill the room. There are new girls - more of misfits from the school since they will need more people in the ensemble beyond the champion dancers.

The dance moms are lined up in the hallway trying to hear what is happening.

Francesca sits in the front sipping a frapp. Maddie and Megan are laying on their stomachs looking at a magazine. Chloe is stretching

Sfx: two loud claps

CLAIRE MOSS:

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

Welcome! Welcome all to our dance drama try-outs. Now.. here's the story.

CARTOON ILLUSTRATION OF THIS FOLKTALE:

V.O. (MADDIE)

Claire proceeds to explain that the drama will be loosely adapted from a folktale of a fisherman who is hit with a storm alone on his boat. A whale comes to life to help save him... but when he brushes him off as an ally and tries to ensnare him with a harpoon - the whale instead swallows him whole. An angel comes to see him. Inside the whale's body he confesses his sins. He hasn't been to mass in a year. On shore his wife and children wait in fear. Ultimately he lives prisoner in the whale's body. But when he never returns to his family they hold a funeral on the beach with an empty casket full of the belongings he left behind

CUT TO:

INT. ELKS HALL

CLAIRE:

And so that's about it. And the main roles will be ... the fisherman, the angel, and the whale.

The whole room turns to the biggest girl in the room.

BIG GIRL:

What..?

CLAIRE

The rest of you will try out to be the pallbearers for the funeral and the waves of the ocean.

She is now making dramatic hand gestures like a wave would... suddenly she is rolling on the floor.

The girls are wide eyed.

Two by two CLAIRE brings the girls forward - asking them to do these dramatic moves while shuffling their feet. They are comically bad.

CLAIRE
YOU! Out.
Out.

She turns to Tierney
Do you have anyone else?

CLAIRE
OK.. Let's break. We will come back
and announce roles.

EXT. STREET - DAYTIME - CONTINUOUS

Its a Saturday. The girls walk to the pizzeria. They are mocking the moves they just learned. Laughing and picking Chloe up, flying her around like an angel.

CUT TO:

INT. ELKS LODGE

Everyone gathers - CLAIRE walks to the front of the room with a paper. Tierney anxiously waits behind her.

CLAIRE
So. Chloe will of course be the angel. Megan will be the fisherman. That girl (pointing to the big girl) will be the whale. That girl (pointing to the prettiest girl in the room with two left feet) will be the wife. Ciara, Maddie, Megan and Francesca will be the storm.. as well as the pallbearers. And Megan will be a pallbearers too since she will technically already be dead by the time we get to that scene.. and no one else can dance.

And the rest of you... I supposed
will be the ocean.

CUT TO:

INT. PRETZEL TRUCK

JACK
So, how did it go?

The girls talk over each other about everything that went on.

MADDIE
And obviously Chloe is the angel

Chloe makes an angel face with her hands.

EXT. TACO BELL DRIVE THRU - CONTINUOUS

JACK
Mom is working tonight so this is
it girls

SOUND UP:

Welcome to Taco Bell. What can I do
ya?

MADDIE
Taco kids meal - one hard, one
soft.
Nachos
Blue Crush

CHLOE
CRUNCH WRAP SUPREME
CIARA
Two

CUT TO:

INT. CONNELLY KITCHEN

The girls have their fast food wrappers laid out on the
kitchen table, sauces laid out

CIARA
Dad, I think I will go to Abby's
tonight. Lori's mom will drive us
but can you pick me up?

JACK
Of course kiddo

CIARA
Mad, what are you gonna do? What
are your friends doing?

MADDIE
(Defensively) I don't know.

INT. CONNELLY KITCHEN - LATER THAT EVENING

Jack is standing over the stove cooking baked beans in a cast iron pan. He transfers the beans to a plate and walks into the other room. The stove is left on low with the empty pan.

INT. CONNELLY FAMILY ROOM

Maddie and Chloe are watching TV - they are eating popcorn out of a metal mixing bowl

Shania Twain "Don't Be Stupid" music video plays

INT. CONNELLY LIVING ROOM

Jack is sitting in his chair asleep, the plate still balancing on his lap. A baseball game left on TV

Sfx: phone dings

TEXT

Dad, I'm ready to come home.

CUT TO:

EXT. WRAP AROUND PORCH OF A LARGE VICTORIAN HOUSE

Ciara sits on the steps. The party is clearly over

She is tapping her foot on the step in the darkness

INT. CONNELLY LIVING ROOM

Jack's chair is empty now

EXT. WRAP AROUND PORCH OF A LARGE VICTORIAN HOUSE

MOTHER of the house:

C'mon Ciara, I will give you a ride home.

CUT TO:

INT. EXTRAVAGANT PARTY - SAME TIME

Sheila is standing behind a chafing dish doling out thinly sliced filet mignon.

GUEST 1:

Oh just a sliver dear, really

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)
GUEST 2, TALL SLENDER WOMAN:
Just a dot for me

A short sharply dressed confident man approaches Sheila and taps her shoulder.

MAN:
I think you need to take this call

EXT. CONNELLY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ciara politely shuts the door and says goodbye before storming into the house.

CIARA
WHERE IS EVERYBODY?!

CLOSEUP FAMILY PHOTOS SMILING; SHOTS OF JACK

Ciara surveying the dark house.

She realizes her dad isn't there.

Neither is his car.

Terrified - her anger turns to fear.

INT. FAMILY ROOM

Maddie and Chloe are fast asleep.

INT. CONNELLY KITCHEN

Sfx: landline rings

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION

Sheila sits in the waiting area on her Nokia phone tears streaming down her face still in her penguin outfit

INT. CONNELLY KITCHEN

Ciara listens on the other end of the phone - we catch a few words. "with dad" "be home soon" "go to sleep"

INT. POLICE STATION

Jack is getting finger printed

CUT TO:

INT. CONNELLY DINING ROOM- LATER THAT NIGHT

They enter thru the backdoor arguing under their breath

SHEILA

What were you thinking?! What if she were the car?! JACK.

Jack is silent

SHEILA

You do know your job is to drive a truck right?! So what now?

Jack stays still

SHEILA

For once in your life - FIGHT. Fight back. Fight for anything you want.

Jack

It was a quota... I had two beers Sheila.

SHEILA

(Tearfully)

Not the type of fight I was hoping for.

Fight to not be average. Fight to not let your wife be humiliated every night serving people who are just like her but somehow better. Fight for these girls. These girls who are SO good.

Jack wells up with tears. His lip quivers.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. CONNELLY KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

Jack is at the counter with a large brown bag. He dumps out fresh bagels on a cutting board

He has made Sheila's - toasted in the oven with butter
Sheila snatches it and brushes by him taking a bite. She is
livid.

SHEILA
Jesus! My tooth.

Jack can't do anything right - her soft Irish teeth are now
his problem too

INT. CONNELLY HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ciara emerges from her room blurry eyed. She spots Maddie
brushing her teeth in the bathroom

INT. CONNELLY BATHROOM

MADDIE
Is everything ok?

CIARA
Yeah its okay

Maddie shrugs unsurprised.

Maddie
What do you think he does on his
dog walks Ciara?
He leaves from the shed.

Ciara looks at her. She knows.

Its all the secrets we keep. We all
know. We're all scared to say it...
because the moment it hits the air,
it all might come true. It might
come crashing down. So we stay
right here.

CUT TO:

INT. CONNELLY KITCHEN

The whole family is gathered around the table eating their
bagels in silence. This will definitely not be discussed.

SHEILA:
(to Ciara)
Are you ready? I'll drive you down
to Johnny Macs

Ciara gathers her things

SHEILA:

Oh how rude of me. Jack did you
want a ride to the bar too?

CUT TO:

INT. ASTRO VAN

They are silent the whole ride. Ciara is too scared to put on
the radio.

Finally when they are nearly at Johnny Macs.

SHEILA

I just... I need you to know....
That is genetic. OK? Do you know
that? And its on my side too.

Ciara nods.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHNNY MACS

Ciara dances in a crowded bar - any given Sunday packed with
people of all ages enjoying themselves. The floor is sticky
which actually helps her hard shoe. She smiles through the
feeling of being their circus animal.

At the end of her set, people ask to take pictures of her.
She complies. She gathers the beer pale full of dollars that
has been passed around and empties it into her dance bag.

FADE OUT.

CIARA BEDROOM- LATER THAT EVENING

She is smoothing out single dollar bills, counting and
marking down in her notebook.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY

Sheila pulls Tierney aside

SHEILA

I'm sorry but there's no way we can
do this. Please don't say anything -
especially not here.

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

Jack lost his job and - I'm doing everything I can but -

TIERNEY

Sheila. No. We will figure this out. Ciara deserves to compete. Plus you already put the deposit on the dress

CUT TO:

INT. ELKS LODGE - DAYS LATER

Tierney stands in the middle of the wood floor hands on her hips.

They are acting out the drama.

Sound Up: Danny Boy plays through a boombox

The girls hoist a large, real coffin.

It is so heavy. It keeps crashing down to the hardwood.

They do this countless times.

Its covered in nicks.

CROSS-FADE TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE OF CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAYTIME

Sound up: Danny Boy plays on bagpipes continuously

People file out of the church dressed in black. The girls and Sheila walk out and towards the van.

MADDIE

Mom, promise you won't...

CUT TO:

EXT. NANA'S BACKYARD

Family gathers in a narrow backyard - half of it is driveway pavement that leads to free standing garage.

There is a keg and men cooking on a grill.

SHEILA:

....Yeah - and the school is going to throw a dinner dance as a fundraiser.. We will let you know when!

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

COUSIN 1:
Why don't you call the cousins
Shel? Ahhh

He motions to another guy

SHEILA:
Which cousins?

COUSIN:
You linked with those Kennedys on
the farm out there - Paddy?

COUSIN 2:
(laughs)
They for sure thought I was coming
to develop the land. 100s of acres.
I broke through to them though.

Cousin 1:
Shel has to take Ciara to Ireland
to dance.
We'll call

Other family members laugh as they look through pictures of
the deceased at a table.

There are posters on poster stands with pictures glued of an
old woman, we learn - Nana's sister.

Aunt Judy approaches the group, raising an eyebrow at Jack
who is holding a red solo cup.

Sheila
Diet coke.

Judy
Ireland?

SHEILA
She needs a new dress too

AUNT JUDY
How much?!

SHEILA
I'm not going to tell you that

AUNT JUDY
I love you but what's it all for? I
am sorry but there is no prize
money. The girls are brilliant...
do you even have a college fund?

Sheila
Jude. She hasn't done anything
wrong except to be good at
something I encouraged her to do.

Maddie, Ciara and Chloe are talking to their cousins

NANA
(interrupting)
Girls... my princesses.

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

Rosemarie would love it so much you know if you could dance?

MADDIE:

(sarcastically)

Oh she'll watch? Do you think she prefers a reel or jig?

They oblige - grab their stuff from the car and change in the kitchen.

When they come back out to the yard in their funeral clothes and dance shoes, everyone cheers.

The girls dance a lively jig.

Everyone dances - they teach four hand reels and cross-kick routines. It is a true Irish wake.

FADE OUT.

INT. CONNELLY HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Jack and Sheila going over finances

JACK

He still has me 5 days

SHEILA:

But paying you half

JACK:

Well if I can't drive this month, yeah. It was a company car - on his insurance. Its better than nothing

Sheila

SHEILA:

You know what would have been best though?

She gets up from the table

Ciara is overhearing in her room staring at the ceiling.

SMASH CUT TO:

Sound Up: iris by goo goo dolls plays

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET

Ciara walking home from school doing her steps down the street; her bookbag bobbing up and down on her back. She has weights on her ankles.

INT. SICILIA HOUSE

Frankie practicing in a basement studio

EXT. CONNELLY BACK DECK

Ciara in her soffee shorts and sports bra pounds her steps in her hard shoes. You can see her heavy breath from the cold air

EXT. PRETZEL HOUSE WAREHOUSE

(continuation of cold air smoke) Sheila waits in the car outside - mittens on, shivering in the Astro van and fiddling with the heat

She starts sobbing uncontrollably - her hot breath looks smoking in the cold air

EXT. PUB

Finn picking up Ciara for her gigs; dancing in pub

INT. NEWS ROOM

Martha is looking up MICK MURRAY on the internet

FADE TO:

INT. ELKS LODGE - DAYS LATER

Champion Solo practice is ending

TIERNEY

One last round on your slip jig

Finley

An Alarm goes off. The other girls look at each other and then slide through the adjoined door to the dark bar.

EXT. DARK ELKS BAR -

The door is slid open so the slip jig plays through and you can see Finley taking up the entire floor.

He is quite spectacular

There are more people than normal today - and of course the same man who sits there everyday

Gesturing to the TV

MEGAN

Do you mind if you switch on MTV
just quickly - should be channel 42

The bartender obliges. The girls catch the premiere of Shania

Sound Up: Shania Twain's "Don't Be Stupid" video plays on
TRL... featuring Riverdance dancers

INT. ELKS LODGE - LATER THAT EVENING

Drama practice day for the dads who will flip the backdrops.

ED MARTIN:

Okay now the way I put together
this piping - the structure will
stand on its own... we will hang
three painted canvases

Four dads assemble across the back of the back drop

UML's sweaty meaty husband

Jack

Vito Penina

Ed Martin

They are 3 short Irish men and one tall guy - the proportions
look off and they are stretching to reach the top of the
piping

TIERNEY

So okay dopeys - I'll give you the
cue when the music change.
And a one, two

ED:

DROP!

TIERNEY:

Off you go...

The whole contraption comes tumbling down.

TIERNEY

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)
 Dino Ed - do you want stilts - or
 arm extenders

She laughs

The men are fighting with each other about the best way to do
 it

They try again. It keeps falling.

Its comedic.

CUT TO:

EXT. WENDY'S DRIVE THRU - INT. ASTRO VAN

SHEILA:
 That contraption is never going to
 work!
 MADDIE.
 And did you see Mr. Sicilia! HA!
 Penina is going to have a word with
 him.
 CIARA:
 I feel like the other girls are
 less mad at me though - since they
 have a reason to compete.
 Sheila
 Mad?
 Maddie
 (talking over)
 Ya?
 Ciara
 Yeah mad. They're not happy for me.
 And I feel guilty that all the
 attention is on me and no one else.

INT. ASTRO VAN

Sheila fully turns around to face her daughter.

SHEILA
 Ciara. You never apologize for your
 shine. The shine you WORKED for.
 Because whether you dim that light
 to 70% percent or keep it at 110%..
 Someone will always be jealous. But
 that also means you are being
 aspirational - let you be an
 example of what to work towards. Or
 let them be bitter. But do you
 ever, ever, stop.
 WENDY'S WORKER

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

(Trying to get her attention at the window; Maddie and Ciara distracted by this almost the whole time)

Ma'am... 12.71.

SHEILA:

(exasperated)

Oh c'mon on ... I was trying to do one of those mom speeches ...did you see the barbie movie?

WENDY'S

(motioning to the cars behind them)
Lady. I have a line

Sheila gathers the money.

They drive away

They are cracking up.

Ciara.

Mom, you're right about it all.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHNNY MACS - SUNDAY BRUNCH

Ciara is dancing her regular gig

A hat sits on the bar as she dances through the crowd

After she wraps Johnny comes to talk with her while she is eating her meal

JOHNNY

So... how's it going with the dress?

CIARA

Not great... We are trying but I still need a bit more plus all the money to travel

JOHNNY

Ah. I see ... and you're a smart girl right.. I bet you see the money thing clearer than your parents sometimes.

Ciara nods.

JOHNNY

Well ...believe it or not I was a real estate tycoon in NYC... this (he gestures around) is just a retirement hobby.

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

If you put your focus enough on anything - if you really believe in it - but also get up and work...Kiddo, you got this.

CUT TO:

INTERIOR GUIDANCE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE

Ciara sits in a chair across from a woman on a computer.

COUNSELOR:

Now Ciara - you are #2 in your class. Which is great -

CIARA:

I want to go to Princeton

COUNSELOR:

Well - that is great. But you know... this is not a prep school ... and even though you are #2 here, its just not guaranteed.

I did research - Quinnipiac has one Irish Dancing scholarship a year

CIARA:

I'm too smart for Quinnipiac... Ivy Leagues are need based. I just need to get in.

COUNSELOR:

Well... then you might consider spending less time dancing at bars on the weekend as the SATs come up. Or focusing on field hockey - you're good enough to get recruited.

FADE TO:

EXT. ITALIAN AMERICAN FESTIVAL

Rows of vendors sell everything from funnel cakes & zeppole's, to sausage and peppers and beer. An Italian man tries to entice people to the high strikers bell game to raise money for the hs football team.

The girls are there with their friends having a normal night. They ride the zipper. Talk to boys. It is clear they are a minority in this very Italian town.

Powdered sugar sprinkles down their outfits as they eat zeppoles and sneak beers.

SUKIE

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

Don't you want any?

CIARA:

I can't

SUKIE:

Ohhhh the pageant, the pageant. Its
always something with you too.

GIRL 2:

We're coming

MADDIE

Nooo you are not...

They tease "we're coming, we're coming!"

Sukie pretends to crown Maddie "Miss Belmar Saint Patrick's
Day"

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. TANNING SALON - SIGN OUTSIDE READS "19.99
UNLIMITED/MONTH"

Frankie gets out of her car and heads into the salon

INT. TANNING ROOM

She takes off her clothes and lays down in the machine,
closing it on top of her.

CUT TO:

INT. CIARA'S BEDROOM

Finley and Ciara are cracking up

FINLEY

Maybe we should do this in the BR

CIARA

No no its fine.. my bed it not
white

She is in a tiny bandeau and underwear and he is trying to
find the right angle to spray this bottle of spray tan

FINLEY

OK turn around

He catches a glimpse of her booty hanging out of her cheeky
underwear. He stares

CIARA

Finn! Hello!

He starts to spray.

She turns around... the bandeau cuts straight across from shoulder to shoulder. She looks down

CIARA

Hmmm but my dress is a V

She pulls in down revealing her chest

CIARA

I mean whatever... you're... anyway

Finley stops.

FINLEY

I'm what anyway?

CIARA

Well you're... you're just my best friend

FINLEY

Right. That's what I thought you were going to say. Just that you thought I was You're friend. That's all then?

Its awkward

FINLEY

I do better than most guys if you must know - its like a male cheerleader - you go where the odds are stacked in your favor and the competition is none.

She is standing there chest out when she starts to nervously giggle - grabbing the comforter from her bed and wrapping it around her

CIARA

Out! Out! Out of here!!!

Finley walks slowly backwards out of the door.

They are both hysterical.

CUT TO:

INT: BANQUET HALL BATHROOM

Several girls are getting ready fighting for space in front of the ladies lounge mirror.

They are dressed in evening gowns.

Maddie is being hovered by a woman in her thirties - Irish but brown hair, brown eyes version and a contagious disposition - this is Katie Kross, Maddie's elementary school teacher of 2 grades who is married but childless and has developed a close bond with Maddie over the years, often coming to birthday parties and becoming a friend of the family.

She has recruited her college roommate who is "good at makeup" to glam Maddie.

Ciara does her own makeup in the mirror.

CUT TO:

INT. BANQUET HALL BALLROOM

The room is filled with tables of people - on each table families gather around all different foods, homemade stuff in Tupperware - it is clear that this is a wedding venue location but tonight, its not being catered.

There are open paper sub wrappers, chips and dips, homemade cupcakes. Its BYO potluck tonight.

A banner hangs across a platform stage at the front of the room that reads "Miss Belmar Saint Patrick's Day Pageant"

Sheila, Jack and Chloe are sitting at a table filled out by Sukie, their twin cousins, Finley.

Katie approaches the table -

KATIE

(taking her seat and giving an update)

They're almost ready - they look great. And I can't imagine the other girls' talents are fit for the occasion?

Sheila laughs.

The Sicilia's are at a table with Ugly Makeup Lady and Tierney. There is Lasagna on the table

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE BALLROOM

Girls are lined up in all different shapes and sizes. Mostly Irish looking but a few wild cards.

INT. BANQUET HALL BALLROOM

A woman takes the podium on stage

CHRISTIE

Good Evening - I am Christie Todd
Whitman - Former Gov of NJ and
proud Grand Marshall of this year's
Belmar Saint Patrick's Day Parade.
We are so excited to celebrate so
many accomplished young women who
will tell us a bit about
themselves, share their talents and
celebrate their bodies!

Sheila hits jack

SHEILA

(the girls met her! When they were
little!)

Jack looks baffled and whispers that she's not a judge and
the girls look much different now

CHRISTIE:

And of course - our winner and 1st
and 2nd runner up will ride on the
float in the Saint Patrick's Day
Parade next year - as well as
receive a 500 dollar scholarship
check and be featured in the Irish
Echo.

Everyone claps.

Christie introduces the judges

The pageant starts.

Each girl is paraded on stage and asked a weirdly specific
question

Maddie makes the crowd crack up.

Maddie, Ciara and Frankie of course all dance as their
talent.

Maddie wins the pageant. Ciara gets 1st runner up.

FADE TO:

INT. ASTRO VAN

Maddie opens her winnings. A check in a plain white envelope
is written out to cash for 500 dollars.

MADDIE

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

(quietly to Ciara)

Ciara - I can cash this and give it to you. That way you can have the deposit for the dress and she can start working - maybe it will be ready for nationals - maybe not but at least it will be ready for when you back it to Ireland.

CIARA:

No way Maddie

MADDIE:

Seriously... college is 50 grand.
Get the dress.

FADE OUT.

FADE TO:

EXT. ASTRO VAN - DRIVING NARROW ROADS OF CATSKILLS MOUNTAINS

CIARA

It says here?

They look over to a small house covered in vines. The front yard is filled with figurines

The dressmaker waits at the door - she gives an air of being a banshee. Calm and inviting but distant like she is connecting with an alternate universe

DRESSMAKER

Why, come in.

The house is lined with bolsters of fabric in every texture and color.

The dressmaker pull up a turquoise and holds it next to Ciara's face

DRESSMAKER

You're definitely a jewel tone

Ciara nods - she walks over to a bolster of pink raw silk.
What about this?

Ciara and the dressmaker sit at her dining table pairing colors together.

DRESSMAKER

I am going to add something extra special. I have a good feeling about you.

She winks.

There is something special about the energy of the dressmaker - holed up in her tiny mountain house - it is similar to what the Irish call a Banshee... someone with more than just earthy powers but a mystical being and you can feel it in the way she moves and talks.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Jack is riding a bike with grocery bags. He waves to the neighbors telling them its for exercise

CUT TO:

INT. CONNELLY KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY

Jack has freshly prepared dinner ready.

Ciara is arrives home and is excited

CIARA
And so we did pink raw silk
Jack
What's raw silk?!

She is showing he and Maddie swatches.

CIARA
Thanks Mad -I love you

TIME LAPSE:

INT. CONNELLY KITCHEN

Dinner ends

FADE TO:

INT. CONNELLY KITCHEN TABLE

Sheila sits at table trying to calculate bills - line things up

FADE OUT.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAYTIME

The feis fathers are pulling out sheets of plywood and laying them down on the floor of an emptied school cafeteria.

Other Feis fathers unload food into the Cafeteria.

Maddie is writing up a poster:

Chips .25 \$

Hot Dog 2.00\$

Etc.

As they lay the sheets of plywood down to create a bigger square another dad pulls silver cut tape across the seams to bond them together.

A dancer follows close behind his pull smoothing it out with her foot.

INT. CLASSROOM

Penina, Sheila, UML, Megan and her mom are arranging trophies on all the desks - writing on sheets of computer paper "Ladies under 15" and so on as they separate and label them.

Frankie picks up the first place trophy and pretends she is accepting it

Mine oh mine

INT. GYMNASIUM

4 different "stages" are laid out and taped down on the floor already - tarps peeking out underneath the wood as to not ruin the floor.

There are tables set in front of each "stage"

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Finley and Ciara are taping up posters where results will be written in

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. SCHOOL - EARLY MORNING NEXT DAY

Countless mini vans roll in parking everywhere in sight - across the grass and all.

They unload all their dancing goods and half asleep girls and boys

INT. GYMNASIUM

The competition is underway

Little girls start in the morning. Tiny in their kilts they do simple jig steps as the nudges nod and encourage them along.

INT.CAFETERIA

This is reserved for the champion level competition - with the "stage" being doubled in size.

Finley's competition is first. He is competing against one of Murray's guys

FINLEY

(watching Murray watch his dancer perform)

I can't stand him

CIARA

Why do you care so much... you beat him every time

The judges have to lean over the table so they are almost hanging off the other side in order to see the steps since the plywood is flat on the ground.

FINLEY

They're just not good guys - I know that. My dad went to HS with him in Dublin

The competition continues

Ciara and Frankie both place high

So does Maddie

You always do better at your own school's Feis. I don't make the rules

A podium is brought out on the floor each time results of a champion competition are ready to be read

The fanfare happens every time - Feis or major competition

INT. HALLWAY FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Finley and Ciara are sitting on the floor - the results POSTER boards over their head. They are reading something

Girls pass by the row of empty poster boards commenting that their results are not up yet

INT. CLASSROOM - SET UP AS TABULATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Volunteer moms are sweating clicking calculators tabulating these scores (there is room for error lol)

Someone hands UML a folder

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

UML comes with results in her hand - she is going to write them with a sharpie on one of the posters

Littler girls flood around eager for results - she writes - they make sound effects

Finley and Ciara don't bother to move

Looking over their hand-written tabulation sheets - Finley dissects what Ciara did wrong... this is the last indicator before Nationals

FINLEY

And I don't love that Oona got a new wig - platinum blonde... its going to really pop on stage

FADE OUT.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - NEXT DAY

Tierney chases Sheila down the hall, her high heel click clacking.

TIERNEY

SHEIL! I thought of a great plan!
We need to get the casket down there right?

Sheila shakes her head in both truth and disbelief

A passerby makes a face at overhearing "the casket"

TIERNEY

(now out of breath)

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

So what if you and Jack drive the truck down to Florida loaded with the gear... and in return I'll pay for the girls flights.

SHEILA:

And how would we do that?

TIERNEY:

You don't think the casket will fit in the pretzel truck?

A student passes by and looks scared

SHEILA:

Well.. it is not a hearse. But Jack doesn't have a license - I don't know how to drive that thing.

Tierney looks her dead in the face

TIERNEY

I bet you'll surprise yourself
(Walking away - talking behind her)
And I'm telling the others I had no other choice - they don't ship caskets like that. No special treatment!

FADE OUT.

EXT. CONNELLY STREET - A DEAD END

Sheila practicing driving with the box truck on the dead end

Jack is in the street directing her

JACK

Its a wide turn ...

SHEILA

I got it I got it

Back, forward, K-Turn

JACK

I doubt we will have to do K-Turns on the freeway Sheil

It is a calamity

CUT TO:

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

Final dress rehearsal for the dance drama

Tierney invited the teachers and townspeople to watch so the room is filled

The girls are fussing backstage with the costumes and the hefty coffin

(V.O.) Maddie
Tierney thought it would be a good
idea to invite some folks from town
to watch the drama - so we knew
what the pressure would feel like
in front of a crowd

Music starts

A cute boy in the audience makes eye contact with Ciara.

Finn looks like he wants to kill him

The dads turn the canvases - the first without a hitch.

The second gets stuck half way down...

They stop the show

They decide to add something with weight to the bottom of the curtain

Next try it drops down properly with its own weight

FADE OUT.

EXT. CONNELLY HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Jack and Sheila load up the truck parked out front.

INT. CONNELLY KITCHEN

The girls are still in their pajamas. Ciara pours a bowl of cereal.

SHEILA
Off we go...

Ciara gives a thumbs up.

She gives them each a kiss.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK

Sheila driving with two hands and white knuckles clutched to the wheel. Jack cracks peanuts in the front seat.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM

Penina is on the phone wit Ugly Makeup Lady

Sound Up: Penina saying "she can't get everything"

CUT TO:

EXT. ORLANDO AIRPORT

The girls walk out to be greeted by cousin Quinn. Quinn is an outside/a civilian to the world of Irish Dance who can unbiasedly observe

She waves big

QUINN
GIRLS!

They are excited to see her. They think she is cool

QUINN
So is it cool if I take you guys to
hotel and help you get set up?

FADE IN:

EXT. DISNEYWORLD

The park and convention center are overrun by dancers. Girls with bright orange spray tanned legs but pale white arms (the dresses have sleeves). Some already have their wigs on... others wear their school warm up costumes

Quinn is funny. She makes jokes about the scene

They meet up with Finley. He and Quinn get along well.

CIARA
We should probably go get my number
and check in. I'll call the other
girls.

EXT. DISNEYWORLD CONVENTION CENTER

Sound up: Moneymaker by Ludacris

Slow motion a motely Tierney crew - Quinn, dance mom and dads, champion dancers and the bootleg dancers playing the "ocean" enter through the glass doors of the convention center to a long table manned by Dancing governance. MICK MURRAY is at the table.

Mrs. Tierney leads the pack in a silk suit that has sweat stains indicative of Orlando in July

MICK

Trisha... a pleasure

TRISHA

That's right, Mick. Yours.

She checks in proudly at the person next to him.

Off to the side, Quinn is flirting with one of the hot musicians.

Ciara excitedly shares her name and gets her card

ATTENDANT

Good luck sweetie (its the same feeling we got from the dressmaker)

CIARA

Thank you! Maddie - take a picture of me and Frankie.

They pose holding up their numbers.

CUT TO:

INT. PUB- LATER THAT NIGHT

The scene is lively - there is live music and the girls dance around ceilis for recreation

INT. PUB - QUIET CORNER

Ciara and Finley are have a moment

He has Guinness foam on his lip

CIARA

The oldest trick in the book.

You've watched too many rom coms

Jack and Sheila enter. They look exhausted.

ED MARTIN:

They've arrived!

PENINA:

The carry-alls are here

INT. PUB TABLE - SAME NIGHT

UGLY MAKEUP LADY

(She always has the tea) You know I heard something

SHEILA
Heard what?

UML:
Well... I can't say if its true...
but I heard MICK MURRAY is finding
a way to favor girls who buy his
dresses... he is here with a room
full of dresses and is promising to
get the girls an advantage

SHEILA:
Not surprising but can't we catch a
break. I just drove a box truck a
thousand miles down I95 to hear
this...

UML:
Maybe consider it... she needs a
new dress anyway ... you know she
deserves to win but its all
political. If you don't help her
with what you know, are you just
hurting her?

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM

The Connellys are in one room with two full beds and a cot.
There is stuff everywhere.

INT. HOTEL ROOM BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack is in the bathroom brushing his teeth

SHEILA
Whispering... you'll never guess
what I heard.

Jack shrugs

SHEILA
MICK MURRAY is running a scam -
girls in his dresses are going to
win. What do we do? We can't break
her heart like this...

JACK:

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)
Nothing to do. We can't afford one
of those dresses.

SHEILA:
Jack..

JACK:
Besides... that's not us... not at
all

FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL LOBBY COFFEE SHOP

Jack approaches Sheila, gives her a look and hands her cash.
She tucks it in her purse.

CUT TO:

INT. SHUTTLE BUS

SHEILA
So... I know we went to see the
dressmaker, but I heard CC has some
dresses here now .. that might fit
you.

CIARA
That we could afford?

SHEILA
Well why don't we just go see

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY

Sheila and Ciara knock on a door

INT HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A young woman opens the door and abruptly snaps a photo of
Ciara and Sheila on a digital camera. The flash makes Sheila
and Ciara squint

YOUNG WOMAN
Come in.

Murray is sitting in the arm besides the bed. There are a rack of dresses lined up. The young woman starts measuring Ciara with a tape measure - her waist, hips and arms

MURRAY

This one.

He points to a bright blue jewel tone dress.

Ciara puts it on. It fits like a glove.

Her grin is ear to ear

SHEILA:

So... if we give you a deposit...
and the rest after competition...
does that still make things...
valid?

Ciara looks confused. Why wouldn't she wear the dress this time around. What's the point?

MURRAY:

That's OK with me...

Ciara and Sheila exit.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

CIARA:

But mom - what's the point? I
haven't qualified for Ireland I may
not need it

SHEILA:

Its a start Ciara... let's just see

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM

Sfx: shower running

SHEILA:

My sister is going to put the money
in my account. I talked to her
earlier

JACK:

Always Judy coming to help. One
more thing to hold over my head for
the next 10 years

I thought she thinks this whole
thing is silly anyway

SHEILA:

Oh stop. This is about Ciara.

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)
And you know how Judy feels about
these people anyway. She's happy to

FADE TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM DOOR

A hand knocks on a door. Murray's girl opens the door and is handed a syllabus. She takes the booklet and slips back in the room.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Murray's girl sits under the desk lamp highlighting names of competitors. Copying their numbers onto an index card.

FADE OUT.

INT. CONNELLY HOTEL ROOM - EARLY MORNING - COMPETITION DAY

Maddie and Chloe are strewn across one bed, fast asleep. Chloe's little foot drapes across Maddie's face.

Jack sleeps on the too small cot, his leg hanging off the side.

Sheila is wide awake making herself as small as possible on a silver of the bed she is sharing with Ciara. She is watching the alarm clock waiting for it to turn.

The clock hits 6:00AM and she quickly gets up, gently waking Ciara and gathering their things.

They tip toe out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

SHEILA
Here works

They set their things on a table in the lobby and Sheila begins parting Ciara's hair into two ponytails - one high and one low. Then pulling as she secures them together and pins them up to her head.

Ciara is eating a powerbar with a post it post taped to it that reads "give em hell"

She winces every time Sheila shoves another bobbi pin in her head.

She looks unrecognizable

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL FRONT DOOR

Sheila puts their things to the side and moves towards the hotel front lawn. Ciara covers her face as Sheila spray paints the front of Ciara's hair an unnatural platinum blonde.

Ciara coughs from the fumes

Civilian guests look on in awe.

CUT TO:

INT. CONVENTION CENTER BALLROOM - NATIONALS STAGE

Stage is grander - banners read "National Championships"

The dancers look grander too. Sharper moves as they warm up. Better makeup. Bigger wigs.

Ciara spots Francesca and Penina who have claimed a corner with their things laid out.

Penina points Sheila to a full row she has reserved.

Oona is going over her steps in the corner.

Another mother hovers over a dancer and is securing a SECOND wig on top of the first making it look like her head might topple over

Another girl has a wig that goes straight up and looks like Marie Antoinette

FRANCESCA
(looking at Marie Antoinette girl)
Well that's a first

SHEILA
Its quite debutante

MADDIE
They know we don't like the English
right?

FINN
 Luckily Marie Antoinette is French.
 And we do quite like them.

They shrug

FINLEY
 Alright now good - I'll warm ya up.

V.O. ANNOUNCER
 (Drawing out of a bingo wheel)
 Ladies under 16 - we have a 15
 minute warning to the start. And we
 will start with our random
 selection to begin ...with
 competitor #32.

PAN TO:

TIGHT SHOT:

Index card 32 sits on Ciara's hip.

CUT TO:

INT. BALLROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tierney parades in... coffee cup in hand, fighting through a
 hangover.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - VENDOR SET-UP - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Jack, Maddie and Chloe pass by the vendor shops where Sean
 Keane is setting up his shoes... used dresses line the walls
 and wigs sit on the top of cork heads.

Something catches Jack's eye... bedazzled poodle socks.

JACK
 Hey girls - why don't we get these
 for Ciara?

MADDIE
 Oh she'll love them

The socks have individual rhinestones glued to them by hand
 and tag reads 60 dollars.

INT. BALLROOM

Tierney insists on putting bright pink lipstick on Ciara.

The rest of the school rolls in and finds their viewing spot.

Chloe runs up to Ciara with the socks excitedly to show her the surprise.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY

Murray's girl walks down the hall, turns a dark corner. She nearly runs into Sheamus O'Donnelly who is sitting like a mannequin in his wheelchair. She drops the coffee cup in her hand but nothing spills. She asks if he is lost.

She picks up the cup like it is weightless and carries on.

INT. BATHROOM

Murray's girl enters the first stall. She exits without the cup. Washes her hands and leaves.

Another woman enters the bathroom. Enters and closes the door of the first stall. Then leaves with the coffee cup.

INT. TABULATION ROOM

Four rows of long tables fill a room. The tables are split and printed paper signs are taped to the front of each indicating "under 16", "under 18" etc.

People are setting up their stations at each table: paper trays, calculators, etc.

The woman from the bathroom walks in and hands the coffee cup to a man.

He abruptly exits - slipping the index card out of the cup, sliding the card in his back pocket and tossing the cup in the trash.

CUT TO:

INT. BALLROOM

Ciara is standing on stage in ready position. The girl next to her is wearing the double wig and looks absolutely redic.

Ciara looks so innocent in contrast. Like she's not meant to be here in the big leagues.

- DANCE ROUTINE -

Ciara crushes it.

One of the girl's wig falls off on stage and they both have to maneuver around it.

Sfx: bell dings

The girls bow.

FADE TO

TIME LAPSE MONTAGE OF GIRLS DANCING

Crazy costumes

Slipping and falling

Tears - defeat - glory

INT. COMPETITION BALLROOM

ANNOUNCER

And that concludes round 1 of
competition

INT. COMPETITION BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

All the teachers corner their girls drilling there hard shoe steps into them.

Girls stretch their arches by walking on their hard show taps on their toes across the carpet. Their feet nearly bending in half.

Tierney looks on to the other teachers to see what they are doing and copies

CUT TO:

INT. TABULATION ROOM

The man from earlier enters the room. He is walking behind stations peering over the score cards.

INT. COMPETITION BALLROOM

Murray enters and sits in a seat in the front row. He makes side eye contact with a judge.

As the dancing starting, Sheila starts to notice that many of the girls have the same small diamond stitched into the corner of their dresses... she starts to make a mark on the syllabus next to their numbers

Competition breaks before recalls

CUT TO:

EXT. BENCH

SHEILA
(talking to herself; hands in prayer)
Why is it never fair really? Please let me know this is OK..

CUT TO:

INT. BALLROOM STAGE

Recalls are announced.

Ciara gets one.

Francesca doesn't

Jack bites his lip

CUT TO:

INT. APPLEBEE'S STYLE RESTAURANT - LATER THAT DAY

The girls eat chicken fingers with their wigs still on and their adidas break-away sweat suits

MEGAN
Idk if Oona was that great today

FINLEY
How about the new girl

WHALE GIRL
(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)
And did you see MICK MURRAY's
hair.. Hot.

They all stare.

CUT TO:

INT. AWARDS ROOM

Awards are packing and bustling.

Major excitement

There is a conga line happening showcasing this crazy cast of
characters

Parents hold plastic cups of red wine.

Megan and Findley sneak one too.

Tierney is wearing a full white suit. Excitedly drinking
white wine.

ANNOUNCER
Now for ladies under 16

V.O. MADDIE
So here's the deal... if Ciara
makes the top 20 PERCENT... she
gets to compete in Ireland. And by
that I mean... we are all going to
Ireland. Tierney would lose her
shit.

ANNOUNCER:
In 18th place, # xx
In 17th place, # xx

Sound Up: Music peaks with excitement

Ciara's face says holy shit. She finds her parents in the
crowd who are standing on chairs and waving.

Tierney is now swinging a feather boa in the air to the beat
of the reel as everyone claps along.

ANNOUNCER:
Congratulations! The remaining
girls have qualified to compete in
the World Championships in Ireland!
Let's hear it for these ladies!

PAN TO:

CLOSEUP SHOT:

Tierney's peed her white suit

BACK TO:

WIDE SHOT:

The audience is going wild to a reel

Sheila's eyes get big - she looks at Jack who is mouthing
I never dropped the money

FLASHBACK - INT. VENDOR ROOM

Jack is using the cash from the envelope to pay for the
bedazzled socks

FLASHBACK - INT. HOTEL HALLWAY

Sheila passes a hotel room door. She checks her phone that
has 4 missed calls from an unknown number. She keeps walking.

INT. BALLROOM STAGE - CONTINUOUS

ANNOUNCER

And in 14th place, Ciara Connelly

Mrs. Tierney has now completely peed her pants - jumping up
and down

Sheila starts to cry.

She looks at Jack.

SHEILA

We didn't believe she could do it
on her own. I hate us.

FADE OUT.

INT. DARK INTERROGATION ROOM

Sheamus O'Donnelly gets wind that Martha has a scoop. One of
his underlings pull her into a dark closet. A light flicks on
her and suddenly she is in the hot seat.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM HALLWAY

A woman who we recognize from the tabulation room meets Sheamus in the hallway. She shakes her head yes.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM AWARDS:

Everyone continues to cheer when suddenly Sheamus storms into the room.

The crowds part the aisle like the red sea making way for his wheelchair as he hollers and his girl runs pushing his wheelchair towards the stage.

He approaches the stairs he summons those around him and suddenly he is being hoisted up on the stage in the middle of the celebrating girls.

He finds MICK MURRAY in the crowd and points to him

SHEAMUS

(pointing to MICK in the crowd)

YOU!!!

Sheamus begins ripping medals away from specific girls on the stage saying they should all be ashamed of themselves.

Girls are shocked. The parents are horrified.

Mick flees the scene.

Martha is recording on her iPhone.

Sheamus grabs the mic and starts outing the numbers of the girls that cheated. Half of them look shocked - it must have been their parents doing.

Penina and UML smile at each other - they can't wait

Ciara doesn't get called.

UML

(to Sheila)

But didn't you...?

Sheila shakes her head.

FADE OUT:

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - DRAMA DAY

Drama is the last competition of the weekend. Every single dancer comes to watch.

The Tierney crew is gathered. The tail of the big whale costume hitting everyone with each move she makes

ED MARTIN

Remember its just 5 minutes to set
up - do you have your stuff

He looks at the other dads. They are more NERVOUS than the girls

CUT TO:

INT. BALLROOM STAGE - DRAMA PERFORMANCE

As it is time to turn the last canvas background, one of the dads trips, he missed his mark to turn and the canvas gets stuck - half of the old background is showing.

Ed reaches his arm around - as the girls perform, you see hands tugging from behind the canvas. Men start bickering.

Suddenly - the whale's tail swipes the PVC pipe and the entire contraption comes crashing down.

Curtain falls.

Befuddled feis fathers are revealed

FADE OUT.

INT. BOX TRUCK

Sound up: Sweetest thing by U2 plays

Jack drive on a pitch black freeway.

INT. AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

The Connelly girls catch their flight - laughing, goofing off, Ciara still wearing the medal around her neck.

FADE OUT.

INT. CONNELLY KITCHEN - 2 WEEKS LATER

Family is gathered around the table.

MADDIE:
These people have never heard of us
mom, why would they let us into
their home?

JACK
Family.

SHEILA:
No, let's really think about this.
We have the fundraiser coming up.
Plus your Johnny Mac's money. Oh!
Plus Lisa at work asked if you guys
would dance at her daughter's
wedding - she'll pay you. And I
have a bunch more catering jobs
coming up.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DINNER LATER THAT EVENING

JACK
What were you talking on the phone
earlier - Frank Patterson? Celtic
Thunder?

CIARA
They asked us to try out to be his
background dancers at Carnegie
Hall!

JACK
Do you know who Frank Patterson is?

MADDIE AND CIARA
Of course not

Sound up: the phone rings

Sheila answers

Ciara and Maddie are sitting at the table trying to listen.

Sheila talking on the kitchen landline

SHEILA:
Yes, your cousins! So my mom

INT. STRAW ROOF COTTAGE IN IRELAND - CONTINUOUS

Dimly lit - a woman talks on a phone that sits on a table next to a shrine of the dead - pictures and candles lit

COUSIN 1:

No we don't know her..

SHEILA:

So my cousin Tom gave me your number - he said he saw you guys 2 years ago. We are 3rd cousins

Their accents are so thick Sheila can barely make out what they are saying but they don't sound thrilled

COUSIN 1:

Ye have to call back. This sounds like something my husband's side would be part of.

Click.

FADE TO:

SCHOOL IN NEWARK - GLOOMY SUNDAY AFTERNOON

A sign hanging reads "How to you get to Carnegie Hall? Practice. Practice"

Girls gather.

INT. SCHOOL IN NEWARK - LATER THAT DAY

FRANCESCA DOESN'T MAKE THE CUT. CIARA, MEGAN, FINLEY AND MADDIE DO.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE INT. CARNEGIE HALL

Sound up: Danny plays by a large Orchestra

The girls perform

FADE TO:

SOUND UP: MUSIC CONTINUES

INT. REPASS

Maddie and Ciara performing at a funeral repass

CIARA
(Whispering to Finn - motioning to
her white outfit)
I thought it was a wedding!
FINN
An angel - reincarnation on demand

The family is Italian and super confused

FADE TO:

MONTAGE -

Maddie and Ciara dancing at weddings etc.

Ciara working at the ice cream shop and tutoring at a table
when its slow

Driving up to check on the dress

Sheila getting money out of ATM; driving it up to dress lady;
jotting down payment plan on envelope

Jack riding his bike

Sheila working

CUT TO:

INT. ELKS LODGE - NIGHTTIME

Mrs. Tierney and Finley are wrapping up a long practice with
Ciara.

Finley and Ciara help her to the car carrying the boombox -
full length mirror - etc.

FINLEY
See you -
CIARA
Thanks Mrs. T - Finley will drive
me home

As long as she pulls away, they get out of his car and sneak
back into the hall. Finley picks the lock to get in and
conducts the real training camp for Ciara

Montage - hours of run throughs of her solo

INT. ELKS LODGE HALL - LATE AT NIGHT

Ciara takes off her shoes. Her sock is bloody on the toes. She takes the sock off. There are lace marks deeply indented in her feet and bloody blisters on her toes and heels.

Finley grabs a foot and starts rubbing it

FADE OUT.

INT. CIARA BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Sound up: Alarm

Ciara throws her covers off and stretches for her toes ... she is in so much pain.

The crisscross lines from her shoes are still indented in her feet.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM

Ciara draws a bath and pours an entire container of Epsom salts from the white carton.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - DINNER DANCE FUNDRAISER

A banner outside reads "Tierney School Dinner Dance"

The dance moms are furiously setting

Jack, Vito Sicilia and Mick Martin are cooking 100 pounds of corned beef and cabbage in a tent over a gas portable stove

The men get along just fine

ED

Cheap food - high margins

Jack laughs.

Two moms sit at a check in table. Poster boards behind them signal table assignments like a wedding seating chart.

The tables are assigned. Each family has sold one or two and invited their friends. "outsiders"

There is a 50/50 - the girls go around and sell tickets to the tables in the costumes

Everyone wants to buy extra from the "Asian girl" (Megan)

All the characters we have seen in the film so far are there

It is jubilant.

The girls all perform a choreographed group number and a select portion of the drama.

There is a dance number.

After the performances there is a D.J..

Sheila and Jack dance to an Elvis song - the awkwardness of the slow dance is palpable. The love lost that comes with hard life, disappointment and middle age.

CUT TO:

EXT. FUNDRAISER - END OF THE NIGHT

The mothers are cleaning up the tables.

TIERNEY
Sheila, can we talk to you?

SHEILA
Of course. Everything was great guys. I feel like I can finally let her be excited now.

TIERNEY
That's just it... you've been doing a lot extra ...

UML
And making a lot of money off Ciara's dancing.. And our school...

TIERNEY
The other parents don't think its fair.

PENINA

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

Not us per se... but its being
talked about

Sheila is stunned.

TIERNEY

We have to ask you to leave the
school.

SHEILA

(Laughing)

But... its in 2 weeks?

They all stare back.

CUT TO:

INT. CONNELLY LIVING ROOM

Finley and Ciara are sitting on the floor. He looks stuff up on a laptop. She flips thru the pages of a book that reads "Irish dancing north east RULES and REGULATIONS"

FINLEY

Look! A dancer must only be asked
to leave a school if he or she
breaks our above outlined rules
-stealing steps
-disrespecting Sheamus O'Donnelly
-Cheating
-adding extra taps to hard shoes

CIARA

(pointing)

And look - a dancer must compete
under the jurisdiction of a
accredited teacher.

FINLEY

You didn't do anything wrong, Ciara

CIARA

Welcome to my life. But who is
going to take me on? Its too late.

FINLEY

First of all, you don't need it...
don't you realize you've come this
far on your own... not because of
her

FINLEY

And secondly... I will.

(MORE)

(TEXT) (CONT'D)

Look at this.

(reading the text aloud)

"A temporary trial- based teaching license cannot be granted to those 17 yo and above who pass the TCRG exam. You will then be required to take the full course..."

Blah, blah, blah. My birthday is tomorrow. I will do it.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE O'DONNELLY'S OFFICE

Finley and Ciara sit in the car.

CIARA

Finley ... can I ask you something?
Why are you doing all this for me?

FINLEY

Well, because Ciara - you are the only

She is locked in his eyes.

FINLEY

You're one of the only dancers I believe in. That's all.

CUT TO:

INT. SHEAMUS O'DONNELLY'S OFFICE

There are swords on the wall. And old memorabilia

FINLEY

And so Sheamus - you know how I adore you. You are like an idol to me. And this would be the first step in a path like yours.

He leans across the desk and holds his hand

FINLEY

(they are holding hands now)
Oh I'm sorry is that ok?

Ciara sits politely, nervously

SHEAMUS

I will give you a shot Finley. I think this will be fun. Plus with all those cheaters in Orlando I'm willing to give the good guys a chance.

FINLEY

Alright then. We have a deal now.

EXT. O'DONNELLY'S OFFICE

Ciara gives Finley the biggest hug. He looks like he's gonna melt.

CIARA
Thanks buddy

He looks like he is really going to melt now.

CUT TO:

EXT. CONNELLY BACK DECK

Finley coaching Ciara on the plywood

INT. JOHNNY MACS

Finley acting like a manager

Sound up: Molly Malone plays

INT. NURSING HOME COMMON ROOM

Finley and Ciara enter the nursing home where she used to dance - Ciara is decked out in a Riverdance type costume - Finley is in a suit. They enter the residents rooms one by one

A old man looks happy to see Ciara.

OLD MAN
Oh! I didn't order anyone!
FINLEY
Ah ha now that's a good one my
friend

The old man is creepy but sweet so you can't be mad at him, he's been locked in this room and is teetering between inappropriate and pulling on your heart strings

CIARA
I am competing in Ireland and
raising some funds to go
OLD MAN
Oh? I once went to Ireland with
Meryl Streep

The old folks are writing checks - 10, 15 bucks each

FINLEY
Just to cash is great!

CUT TO:

INT. CONNELLY KITCHEN

SHEILA

Yes I am going to call them again.
I want to meet them anyway... I
read that we lived at the glen of
the mad... people would come and
drink from the water to cure their
madness.

MADDIE:

I can't wait for you to have a few
sips

Sheila on the landline

SHEILA

Hello.. Hi yes

She blabbers on about Ciara competing

SHEILA

And crazily enough Ciara qualified
and is competing in the worlds -
her teacher(blabbering On)

INT. IRISH COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

MALE COUSIN

Alright then ... what are the dates

A woman sitting to his side hits him hard on the arm

WOMAN 1

Are you nuts? They are probably
trying to claim some of the land -
a golf course or something. Those
Americans.

MALE COUSIN:

So I'll tell you this.. tell the
cabbie to bring you to pub ashes

INT. CONNELLY KITCHEN

SHEILA
OK! Is there an address?

INT. IRISH COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

MALE:
PUB.. ASHES.

SHEILA:
I understand. Pub ashes - but a we
don't tell the taxi driver a
street?

INT. IRISH COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

MALE COUSIN:
(looking at his wife dumbfounded)
ay ya tell them... pub ashes

Both parties look confused but shrug it off

FADE TO:

MONTAGE - COUNTDOWN TO IRELAND - 1 WEEK TO GO

-Sheila working more catering jobs, coming home tired

-Ciara dancing at johnny macs

-Jack on his bike

-Sheila frustrated on the phone to the Irish cousins

Sound up: "just tell them the pub ashes" the voice thru the
phone says

"ok! Is there a street name?"

"the pub ashes..."

-Finley and Ciara the unstoppable team

INT. ASTRO VAN ON HIGHWAY

Sheila and Ciara drive to pick up the dress after pooling the
final lot of their money together.

INT. DRESSMAKER'S HOUSE

Dress fits perfectly

Sheila pulls out all the cash and hands it to her. She hands some back.

DRESSMAKER

Why don't you keep a bit for your trip. I know you'll pay the rest when you are back...

With the extra money, they can buy Maddie a plane ticket.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPRAWLING SHOTS OF THE IRISH LANDSCAPE

EXT. AIRPORT - PLANE TOUCHING DOWN - CONTINUOUS

Sound up: song continues

Cast exits the plane from external staircase. Sheila, Finley, Maddie and Ciara make their way to a cab. Sheila instructs that they are to meet at pub ashes. The driver understands and asks where they are headed, Sheila explaining their cousins who live at Gaelic glen. The driver asks Sheila if she knows what that means - because of course, it means the "glen of the mad"

Montage - beautiful scenery of Ireland

EXT. STREET CORNER WITH NO SIGNS

Cab driver lets them out and asks if they are going to be okay. A few moments later the cousins pull up in a smart car. They help pack all their suitcase in and continue on down the dirt road. The car is so packed the bottom bounces off the dirt road as they drive.

EXT. HOUSE WITH THATCHED ROOF ON WIDE OPEN FARM

The car pulls up to the cottage. Cousin Patrick gives a tour of the land showing the ruin house where nana was born (in Ireland they never knock down houses as they are an ode to their ancestors, they just let them depreciate to ruins). Sheila asks about the glen she had read about online. He then walks them to the glen - Sheila explaining how she read people would travel from all around the world to be cured. Magicians would come...

Patrick prompts Ciara and Sheila to try it themselves before saying "yeah, I've never heard that but it did test for strong lithium levels last year"

INT. INSIDE THE COTTAGE

In the living room there is a table with a photo of a woman and a young boy surrounded by lit candles. They explain their son has died and this is the lasting memorial (another Irish thing).

Sheila begins asking about the family - the cousins are confused by her curiosity. Sheila learns her grandmother left for America during the famine and became an indentured servant.

Their grandfather, her mother's brother, stayed to take care of the farm. Sheila what became of him..

"oh" their faces turn

"a sheep accident" they say, taking their hats off and bowing their heads.

"a sheep accident?" Sheila questions

They just shake their heads refusing to talk further about such a tragedy.

CUT TO:

INT. PUB - NIGHT

There is a session happening - local people play their instruments and everyone gets up and dances

Finley's old friends from Dublin have come in to join them

SOUND UP: Belle of Belfast plays

FINLEY

(singing to Ciara across the table)

She is handsome, she is pretty,
she's the Belle of Belfast city!

They all clap "1, 2, 3!"

He drags her up to dance - swinging her around

Over dinner of shepherds pie and burgers that taste different, Sheila, Ciara, Finley laugh their asses off trying to decide what a sheep accident is..

"maybe a sheering accident?"

"maybe a sheep trampled him?"

And many other wild scenarios...

Ciara holds up two pints of Guinness and Finley snaps a photo

He is hopelessly in love with her and she has no idea

Finley and Ciara decide to head upstairs to the room in the bed and breakfast. Sheila says she is going to sit here for another minute and finish her Guinness.

CUT TO:

INT. PUB BAR -LATER THAT NIGHT

A woman slides over and strikes up conversation with Sheila. They talk about life and being a mother - and how it never feels like you're doing enough, or doing it right.

She asks her if she's ever heard about a sheep accident.

Finally Sheila bows out for bed too.

CUT TO:

INT. BED AND BREAKFAST - NEXT MORNING

The host serves Ciara, Sheila and Finley a big Irish breakfast - bacon, sausage, eggs, potatoes, beans, soda bread or toast, tomatoes, mushrooms, and white or black pudding.

INT. BED AND BREAKFAST CHECK-IN DESK

As Sheila heads out to leave - the host waves her down and gives her an envelope. Inside, is 1000s of dollars with a note that says "the whole shebang" ... not signed.

EXT. IRELAND ROAD - SAME MORNING

SWEEPING EST. SHOTS: DRIVING THE SINGLE LANE ROADS THAT WEAVE THROUGH THE SWEEPING Irish LANDSCAPE driving through

EXT. GLEN EAGLE ARENA - SITE OF THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sign reads

"welcomes dancers of the world to the 2004 world championship"

INT. GLENEAGLES ARENA

The girls look elite. They are skinny, spray tanned - they are not wearing big curly wigs but instead wearing their hair slickly pulled back with a curly bun placed neatly on top and a simple diamond tiara at the front of their head.

Finley and Ciara panic they are behind on the trend and quickly readjust.

FINLEY
(to Ciara)
We re-adjust. No stress my love.

Ciara spots dancers she has seen in her id magazines. It is like seeing a-list celebs to her.

INT. ARENA STAGE

The room is dark and spotlights illuminate the stage. Ciara takes her place.

INT. ARENA AUDIENCE

The cousins have all come to watch Ciara.

INT. ARENA STAGE

Ciara slips during her hard shoe. A judge quickly bangs on her bell. She insists that there is a flaw in the stage - that spot is slippery and Ciara should be allowed to begin again.

As the judge turns over her shoulder, Sheila catches her face.. She is the woman from the pub. And that's the luck of the Irish.

INT. JOHNNY MACS

Johnny sits at the bar watching the local news report where Martha has traveled to Ireland to report on Ciara's performance.

He smiles to himself.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. IRELAND AIRPORT

The cousins send them off -

PATRICK

And now... next summer... you all
come back without your mom and you
can train here with the best
teachers... what do you say?

THE END.

CREDITS - MADDIE AND CIARA ON THE SAINT PATRICK'S DAY PARADE
FLOAT

FINLEY BY CIARA'S SIDE

FADE OUT.