DANCE* NATION
DANCE TEACHER PAT  The head of the dance studio. A man (I think!)
AMINA  The star dancer
ZUZU  Always second best
CONNIE  A talented dancer who thinks she should play the role of Gandhi
LUKE  The only male dancer on the competition team.
MAEVE  The oldest and least talented dancer on the team
SOFIA  Knows what’s up
BRITTANY  Future president of a post-apocalyptic USA
VANESSA  Could have been a phenomenon
  *(aka THE CRUMPLED SAILOR)*
ZUZU/LUKE’S MOM  Means well. Grown up Wendy

And a whole army of tiny dancers

**Note on casting:** All characters except Dance Teacher Pat are between the ages of 11 and 15 years old. They should be played by adult actors (for the most part) and should range in age from 12 to 65. There is no need for any of the actors to resemble teenagers. And the more diverse the cast the better.
Blinding white lights. Thunderous applause.

A curtain drops.

THE GOD MIC
Alright girls. That’s it. Good show. Let’s clear the stage.

Thirty little bodies run in all directions.

A crumpled sailor is left behind. She is bleeding profusely and her femur is sticking out of her skin.

CRUMPLED SAILOR aka VANESSA
I can’t get up

A tiny dancer dashes back across the stage without stopping.

CRUMPLED SAILOR aka VANESSA
I can’t get up

Another tiny dancer comes back on stage. She sees the crumpled sailor and slowly backs off the way she came.

Suddenly, a voice from the God mic.

THE GOD MIC
Hey. You in the sailor suit. Let’s go

CRUMPLED SAILOR aka VANESSA
I think there’s something wrong with my knee

THE GOD MIC
Hey Minda? We’ve got a sailor down. Can you come get her off the stage please?

MINDA (yelling from somewhere far offstage)
Coming!!!!

A long moment of the crumpled sailor alone on the stage, bleeding.

One-by-one the tiny dancers come back on stage and stand in horror around the crumpled sailor.

SOFIA
Oh my god
CONNIE
Oh my god

BRITTANY
Oh my god what happened?

CRUMPLED SAILOR aka VANESSA
I landed funny

SOFIA
Wow. That’s really bad

One of the girls starts to cry.

THE GOD MIC
Hey Minda? Can you bring some paper towels? And maybe some–

MINDA (*yelling from somewhere offstage*)
Sorry! Just a minute!

SOFIA
Does it hurt?

One of the stage lights comes undone. It falls to the stage and lands with an enormous BANG like a cannon going off.

The tiny dancers scream and run in all directions.

The crumpled sailor – once again all alone onstage and bleeding.

A long moment of silence, and then…

THE GOD MIC
Just sit tight, honey. Someone’s calling an ambulance.

2

Dance Teacher Pat stands in front of an army of little girls and Luke – the one male dancer in the group.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Alright girls
We’ve got a lot of work to do
Nationals is two weeks away
And we’re a mess.
Maeve. Get that hair out of your face

6.15.2015
Maeve pushes her hair back. It falls back into her eyes.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Where’s your hair tie?

MAEVE
In the dressing room

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Run and get it

Maeve runs out of the studio to get a hair tie.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
I want to do something special
Something these judges have never seen before
Something that’ll kick ‘em in the gut

It’s going to be a Bollywood-inspired number

The girls all gasp.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
It’s called SUNRISE ON MY COUNTRY and it’s about the life of Gandhi. Who can tell me who that is?

The girls and Luke look at their feet.

Amina raises her hand tentatively.

AMINA
He’s a leader.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
He’s from India. You should know this. He went on a hunger strike and stopped eating

Dance Teacher Pat looks at them menacingly.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
It’s going to be a really beautiful number about resistance. You’ll all be playing lotuses. And one of you will play the role of Gandhi.

They all look at Connie – the only Indian-American student in the class.

Sofia raises her hand.
DANCE TEACHER
Yes Sofia

SOFIA
I don’t think it’s fair that Gandhi is the star

They all look at Connie.

DANCE TEACHER
I don’t know which one of you will play the role of Gandhi yet. It could be anyone.

Zuzu raises her hand.

ZUZU
I’d really like to play the role of Gandhi.

DANCE TEACHER
You’re all going to learn the part and then we’ll see who does it best

Luke raises his hand.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Yes Luke?

LUKE
Is Vanessa okay?

DANCE TEACHER
Vanessa’s in the hospital. Vanessa’s doing fine.

LUKE
Is she coming back?

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Vanessa won’t be dancing with us for awhile.

They all look at the floor.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
That’s what happens when you don’t roll through your feet properly when you land.
Alright. Spread apart. Let’s start stretching.

Maeve bounds back in from the dressing room – her bangs awkwardly pinned back with butterfly clips.
DANCE TEACHER PAT
Maeve. Sorry but I’m going to have you sit this one out.

Maeve crumples and heads back into the dressing room, head down.

3

The girls and Luke audition for the role of Gandhi.

They do the dance as if we could only see a close-up on their faces. They are perfectly still except for their eyebrows, their nostrils, their mouths, etc. At the moment in the dance where they would leap, they breathe in deeply through their nostrils. At the moment in the dance where they would do a series of turns, they breathe out through their mouths. They furrow their brows as the music swells and then break into a radiant look of surprise. Everything is perfectly choreographed. It is a complex and exquisitely rendered ballet of the face.

ZUZU
Hey

AMINA
Hey

ZUZU
Good job

AMINA
You, too!

ZUZU
You were awesome

AMINA
Oh my god. You were awesome

ZUZU
Your turns were crazy. You went so fast

AMINA
I loved your faces. You were so intense

ZUZU
I’m such a diva

AMINA
It was crazy
ZUZU
Was my side aerial okay?

AMINA
Yeah it was good

ZUZU
It felt a little lopsided

AMINA
Maybe a little but you caught it

ZUZU
But a little?

AMINA
Maybe a little but I didn’t really notice, I feel like you pulled it off

ZUZU
Okay good

AMINA
I hope we both just get it

ZUZU
Yeah! I hope we’re both just Gandhi!

AMINA
Gandhi One and Gandhi Two

ZUZU
Oh my god. That’d be awesome

4

The dressing room post-auditions. The girls and Luke are changing into their street clothes. They get completely, uninhibitedly butt-ass naked in front of each other as they talk.

BRITTANY
If I get a dog, it’s gonna be a wolf-dog

CONNIE
A what?

BRITTANY
A wolf-dog
CONNIE
That’s bad for the wolves

SOFIA
What’s a wolf dog?

BRITTANY
No it’s not

LUKE
Half-dog, half-wolf

CONNIE
Ask Maeve. She’s really into wolf-preservation

BRITTANY
Maeve

MAEVE
I’m really into what?

CONNIE
Wolf-preservation

MAEVE
Oh. Yeah

BRITTANY
I wanna get a wolf-dog

MAEVE
That’s bad

CONNIE
See

BRITTANY
Why is that bad? / They’re beautiful

MAEVE
It’s bad for the wolves. They’re not pets. / They’re wild animals

SOFIA
I’m not into wolf-preservation. I’m into wolf-extinction

CONNIE
Okay, you freak

BRITTANY
Wait. Are you serious?

SOFIA
I’m not really into wolf-extinction. I just think they’re scary
BRITTANY
They’re not scary

MAEVE
I want to walk to school with wolves

CONNIE
No you don’t

MAEVE
Yes I do! I want to walk to school with the wolves howling / in the mountains

SOFIA
Hey Amina. Did you do it?

AMINA
Huh?

Sofia makes a gesture like she’s thwacking a pussy.

AMINA
I tried

SOFIA
You tried?

AMINA
Nothing happened

SOFIA
Nothing happened????!

AMINA
I don’t know why. I really tried!

SOFIA
What did you do?

BRITTANY
Wait. What’s happening?

CONNIE (to Brittany)
She’s teaching Amina how to masturbate

SOFIA (to Connie)
Shut up

BRITTANY
To masturbate?

CONNIE
What? I think it’s cool!
SOFIA
Wait, so. What did you do?

AMINA
I don’t know. I just did what you told me

SOFIA
Uh-huh

AMINA
For like a long time

SOFIA
What did you think about?

AMINA
You’re supposed to think about something?

SOFIA
Amina! That’s like—
The whole thing
Is mostly / just thinking

CONNIE
Yeah, it’s mostly just thinking

AMINA
What do you think about?

SOFIA
I don’t know I’ll tell you later

CONNIE
Swimsuits

       Connie laughs.

CONNIE
I don’t know why. I mostly think about like…taking off swimsuits

BRITTANY
I mostly think about someone being really mad at me. Like yelling

       By this point, they’re all naked.
AMINA
Who do you guys think is going to be Gandhi?

MAEVE
You

LUKE
You

SOFIA
Definitely you

CONNIE
I think I should be Gandhi

BRITTANY
I think Connie should be Gandhi too

ALL THE GIRLS
...

CONNIE
I think it’s weird if Amina’s Gandhi. I think she doesn’t really fit

SOFIA
I think anyone can play Gandhi because Gandhi was about loving and accepting all people

CONNIE
...

LUKE
Maybe Zuzu will be Gandhi

SOFIA
Zuzu’s not going to be Gandhi

LUKE
Why not?

SOFIA
Because she’s not as good as Amina

LUKE
I think Zuzu would make a good Gandhi
CONNIE
Where’s Zuzu?

BRITTANY
Where’s Zuzu?

MAEVE
She’s talking to her Mom

Zuzu in the corner of the dressing room, talking to her Mom.

ZUZU’S MOM
Did you get intimidated?

ZUZU
No

ZUZU’S MOM
It’s intimidating, isn’t it?

ZUZU
...

ZUZU’S MOM
You did great, honey

ZUZU
I know

ZUZU’S MOM
You’ll get it next time. Just don’t psyche yourself out, okay?

ZUZU
I won’t

ZUZU’S MOM
You’re better than Amina. You just have to not psyche yourself out

ZUZU
I’m not psyching myself out

ZUZU’S MOM
She may be more technically skilled than you, you know, but it doesn’t matter. It’s the heart that matters, you know. She may be flawless but it doesn’t matter because she doesn’t dance with any heart, you know what I’m saying. You have heart. That’s why she’ll never really beat you even if she wins
ZUZU
I win sometimes

ZUZU’S MOM
I know

ZUZU
...

ZUZU’S MOM
You forgot about the plié, huh?

ZUZU
I don’t know

ZUZU’S MOM
During the bridge, you forgot to do the little plié. That’s why you stumbled in the transition.

ZUZU
I don’t remember.

ZUZU’S MOM
Other than that it was a really, really good audition.

Connie and Luke walk past Zuzu and her Mom on their way out the dressing room.

CONNIE
Oh hey Zuzu

LUKE
Oh hey Zuzu

CONNIE
Good job

LUKE
Really really good job, Zuzu

He smiles at her.

LUKE
You were really great
Zuzu
People say I dance with a lot of grace and that I’m beautiful and above-average and stuff. Here’s what they don’t say. They don’t say I’m sensational. They don’t say I take their breath away. They don’t say they could watch me forever. They don’t say they cry when they watch me dance. When they watch Amina dance, they cry. I know. Because I cry when I watch Amina dance.

My Mom asked me to dance for her cancer. She saw a documentary about this woman who did a dance and it cured her cancer and so she asked me if I would do a dance for her and my Mom is not normally like that but she was feeling really emotional at the time and she kept breaking down all the time so I did this solo at the year end recital for my Mom and her cancer. And I tried to make it the best dance I had ever done. I tried to like feel things with my arms and my legs. I tried to make people feel things with my arms and my legs. … But it was just an ordinary dance, really. A lot of people didn’t know it was about my Mom’s cancer at all. They thought it was about whatever our dances are usually about. Flowers. Or sailors, you know. Not cancer. I didn’t make them cry. I didn’t make myself cry. I don’t even think I made my Mom cry. She told me that she liked it. But she didn’t cry. And it didn’t cure her cancer, so. Her cancer actually got worse after that, so. It was just an ordinary dance.

Luke says I’m a genius dancer but he’s lying to me because he’s in love with me. Luke has dandruff. I know because I was playing with his hair the other day and I parted his hair and at the base of his hair near his scalp were all these flakes of scalp sitting in his hair like dead ants that had just crawled out of a hole and died.

A giant mop of black curly hair descends from the fly space. It shakes. Lotus petals fall from the black curly hair like flakes of dandruff.

Zuzu dances the audition piece for Gandhi. She’s not that great. Connie appears and dances the part of Gandhi with her.

They keep dancing… The stars come out.

Luke and his Mom driving home from dance.

LUKE’S MOM
You sleepy?

LUKE
...
LUKE’S MOM
You look sleepy
LUKE
Yeah

LUKE’S MOM
It takes it out of you, doesn’t it?

LUKE
Yeah

LUKE’S MOM
...

LUKE
...

LUKE’S MOM
...

LUKE
How was your day?

LUKE’S MOM
Oh you know

LUKE
...
...
...

LUKE’S MOM
I think that new priest candidate is coming
From Pennsylvania
So that’s good

LUKE
...

LUKE’S MOM
Apparently it’s some kind of secret
She’s not telling her congregation that she’s thinking of leaving, so
We have to be all secretive about it
She’s flying cross-country on a Tuesday so she won’t be missed, so
I don’t know
It sounds kind of crazy to me but
Who knows
She’s our only candidate, so
Hopefully she’s not too crazy

LUKE
She’s flying cross-country?

LUKE’S MOM
Yeah

LUKE
And she’s not telling anybody?

LUKE’S MOM
Apparently

LUKE
That’s cool

LUKE’S MOM
It’s stressful … It’s more stressful than it’s cool

I just hope this lady from Pennsylvania does more than give good sermons. Good sermons don’t bring in crowds. We need someone who’s a go-getter. She’s 52, so. I don’t know. I was hoping for someone younger.

LUKE
Yeah

...
to sit my naked ass on the radiator at home growing up. A hot butt makes me sleepy. And I’d get so sleepy. Riding in cars at night. But it’s the delicious kind of sleepy. Where you wish you could stay in that liminal state forever watching the raindrops on the windshield and the world blurring by........and my Mom...listening to my Mom... remembering listening to my Mom.... all I want is to be in a car at night, sleepy and listening to my Mom

...
...
...

LUKE’S MOM
How’s dance?

LUKE
Huh?

LUKE’S MOM
How was dance? Did you learn something?

LUKE
It was fine

LUKE’S MOM
What are you working on now? Are you still doing that sailor–

LUKE
No we switched. We’re doing lotuses ... 
...
We’re doing this whole thing with Gandhi

LUKE’S MOM
That sounds fun 
...
...
And you’re liking it?

He shrugs.

LUKE’S MOM
Because you don’t have to keep doing it if you’re not liking it. ... You could do ice skating / or music
LUKE
No I like it!

LUKE’S MOM
Just as long as you’re liking it

LUKE
I like it

LUKE’S MOM
Okay
...
...
That’s good
...
...

LUKE
...
...
...
...
...
...
...

LUKE’S MOM
...
...
...
...
...
...
...

Somewhere,
moon, window etc.

CONNIE
Dear God
Please

Please
Please give me
the part of
Gandhi
I promise I’ll do
a good job,
please Lord
Please let it be
me, just this one
time, please, just
this once,
let it
be
me
The girls are lined up in leotards and spandex – ready for class. A little army.

ALL GIRLS PLUS LUKE
If I could change the world through dance
If I could change the world by dancing with my body
If I could dance away my mom’s cancer
And my friend Alyssa’s depression
And the way she won’t stop eating skittles when she’s hungry
Instead of eating proper food
If I could dance away world hunger
And all violence against woman
And all pets without a home
And all the sadness
All the sadness
All the sadness and the meanness
If I could dance and nobody would ever want to kill another person again
Or be racist again
Or feel alone at night again
Or abandon their pets without a home again
That’s what I would do
That’s what I would do
That’s what I want to do with my LIFE

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Alright girls
Great auditions
It wasn’t easy but I’ve made my decision

They all hold hands – nervous, expectant

ALL THE GIRLS PLUS LUKE
I want to dance
I want to dance
I want to heal the world through DANCE
I want to dance
I want to dance
I want to feel alive through DANCE
I want to dance
I want to dance
I want to dance

DANCE TEACHER PAT
And the role of Gandhi will be played by…
ALL THE GIRLS PLUS LUKE
I want to dance
I want to dance
I want to dance
I want to dance
I want to dance
I want to dance

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Connie!

All the girls gasp and gather around Connie supportively, who is beaming.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
But there’s a twist…

The girls freeze – terrified.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
In addition to the role of Gandhi, I have created another role. The role of the spirit of Gandhi.

(Oh my god! Another chance at a featured part!)

DANCE TEACHER PAT
And the role of the spirit of Gandhi will be played by……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………ZUZU!

The girls scream bloodcurdling screams. They gather around Zuzu supportively, who is on the verge of tears. Luke throws his arms around her. All genuine.

MAEVE
Congratulations!

SOFIA
Congratulations!

AMINA
Congratulations, Zuzu, you’re gonna be great!

BRITTANY
That’s so exciting
Zuzu
Thanks guys

DANCE TEACHER PAT (to Zuzu)
Are you happy?

Zuzu (barely able to speak)
Yes

DANCE TEACHER PAT
This is your chance Zuzu. The group is counting on you. Don’t mess it up

7
Later.

Sofia
It’s not that big of a deal. The Gandhi dance is lame anyway

Amina
Yeah

Sofia
Gandhi doesn’t even do anything. Connie just sits on a cushion

Amina
But the spirit of Gandhi…

Sofia
Whatever. Zuzu’s going to mess it up

Amina
…

Sofia
You know she’s going to mess it up. Dance Teacher Pat’s just trying to be nice. He can’t give you the solo every time

Amina
You don’t think he’s mad at me?

Sofia
Nah. The dance is lame so he gave it to Zuzu

Amina
You think so?
SOFIA
Oh yeah. I know so

Zuzu in the other room working on the Gandhi part with Dance Teacher Pat. We hear him like we’ve never ever heard him before – vicious, mean punishing…

DANCE TEACHER PAT (offstage)
Are you an idiot?

ZUZU (offstage)
I don’t know

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Then why are you acting like one?

ZUZU
I don’t know

DANCE TEACHER PAT
You don’t know?

ZUZU
I don’t know what you’re asking!

DANCE TEACHER PAT
I’m asking you to do it again. And do it right this time.

... 

And don’t try so hard. It’s embarrassing.

(Sofia and Amina listening to Zuzu & Dance Teacher Pat in the other room…)

SOFIA (not unkind)
Bet you 50 dollars she has a nervous breakdown by the end of the week

AMINA
Zuzu’s a good dancer

SOFIA
I know

AMINA
She’s really talented

SOFIA
She is
The girls at the barre. Dance Teacher Pat has left Amina in charge. He’s in the other room talking to Zuzu’s mother. Zuzu is sitting on the toilet in her tights and leotard, mortified.

AMINA
Alright so assume first position and then we’re just going to go through the pliés

The music plays, classical piano barre music.

AMINA
Demi plié and…
Demi plié and…
Grand plié…

ZUZU’S MOTHER
She’s not allowed to be the best dancer she can be. You don’t let her

DANCE TEACHER PAT
I don’t let her?

ZUZU’S MOTHER
You purposely intimidate her!

DANCE TEACHER PAT
That’s my job!

ZUZU’S MOTHER
You put her down. You make her think she can’t do it!

DANCE TEACHER PAT
I teach! I correct! It’s up to her whether or not she thinks she can do it!

(Zuzu alone on the toilet.)

AMINA
Bend at the waist…
And…come…up…
Second position

ZUZU’S MOM
Listen to me
There’s no such thing as talent
People plant it in their minds
Whether they’re good at this
Or bad at that
And they become whatever you tell them they are

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Okay

ZUZU’S MOM
Genius’ have had their cocks sucked by / a lot of people

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Okay, please don’t talk like that

(The girls
ears perk up.
What’s
going on...)

AMINA
Demi plié and
...
ZUZU’S MOM (back to hushed tones)
Demi plié and
...
Grand plié
...
DANCE TEAHER PAT
...
What do you want me to do?
...
...
ZUZU’S MOM
...
...
...
...
...
I want you to tell her that she’s special
Bend and...
I want you to tell her that she’s a genius
...
...
DANCER TEACHER PAT
...
I can’t / do that
Up...
...
ZUZU’S MOM
...
I want you to whisper in her ear that she’s amazing and that she takes your breath away every. single. time. she dances. That’s!
Demi plié and
...
What I want you to do
...
Demi plié and
DANCE TEACHER PAT
...
If I don’t see it, / I can’t
...
...
ZUZU’S MOM
...
She’s only a child
... DANCE TEACHER PAT
... Yes, well
... Children live in the world
... And it’s not some special world
... Where everyone gets a chance
... There’s such a thing as talent
... And we all know it when we see it
... And there’s also such a thing as charisma
... And momentum
... And destiny
... And we know it when we feel it, so
... Don’t tell me
... To go against the world
...
... ZUZU’S MOM
... You make her! You make her! I’m saying that you make her!
... ...
... ...
... So make her!
Bennnnnnnd ... I’m asking you to make her

Other side

AMINA
Demi plié aaaaannnnd…
Demi plié aaaaannnnd…
Grand plié aaaaaannnnnnnd…

BRITTANY (whispering)
Pussy

AMINA
Second position
Demi plié aaaaannnnd…
Demi plié aaaaaannnnd…
Grand plié aaannd…

BRITTANY (whispering)
Pussy

CONNIE (whispering)
Pussy

AMINA
Bend at the waist…
And…come…up…
Fourth position
Demi plié

CONNIE (whispering)
Pussy

BRITTANY (whispering)
Pussy

MAEVE/SOFIA (whispering)
Pussy

CONNIE (whispering)
Pussy

BRITTANY (whispering)
Pussy

AMINA
Demi plié
…

Grand…
…

Bend and…
…

Come…up…

BRITTANY/CONNIE/MAEVE/SOFIA (whispering)
…
…
Pussyyyyy

AMINA (normal speaking voice)
And move your pussy into fifth position

(Victory!!!!!!)

AMINA
Demi plié and–
Demi plié and–

Grand plié
…

Bend at the pussy…and…bring your pussy back up….
Dance Teacher Pat comes back into the room.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
How’s it going, girls?

AMINA
Good. We’re almost done with warm up

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Where’s Zuzu?

Blank stares.

(Zuzu still alone on the toilet. Somehow, someway she’s grown little sharp teeth. Like fangs. She bites her forearm hard. Harder. Blood spurts out. She chews off a chunk of her arm.)

DANCE TEACHER PAT
ZUZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ

ZUZU
Yes!

(She jumps up off the toilet and dashes out of the bathroom into the studio, her arm still pulsing blood.)

ZUZU (still with her fangs)
I’m here

DANCE TEACHER PAT
We’re going to run through the number
Everybody ready?

They nod.

LUKE (to Zuzu)
You okay?
ZUZU
I’m fine

DANCE TEACHER PAT

5-6-7-8!

They dance.

Except it’s not really like Gandhi.

It’s more like baby sexy robots. Bloodsucking robots who want to destroy the world and then fuck it after it’s dead.

They are barely wearing any clothes. They are touching their bodies. They are gnashing their teeth – all of them have fangs now. Sharp, pointy teeth.

You say you’re a big boy
But I can’t agree
Cuz the love you said you had
Ain’t been put in me
I wonder...
If I’m just too much for you, wonder
Please don’t make me just wonder
Duh-duh-duh-duh-duh-duh
Take a chance to recognize that this could be yours
Baby, can’t you see?
How these clothes are fitting on me
I’m about to blow
I don’t think you know.................

They are climbing up the walls. Maeve is chewing on the light bulbs – glass in her mouth. Glass is crushed beneath their feet. Zuzu does her special part. She’s awesome.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Alright girls. I don’t know what THE FUCK this is. But it’s not Gandhi.

Zzzzzz. The lights go out with an electric hiss except for one bright light shining down from Heaven on……Brittany…panting, still baby sex robot power, etc. Half-dressed, her hair sticking to her forehead.

The buzz of the music beneath her. She talks to us. Not vein, not bragging. Just genuinely pondering the possibility…
BRITTANY
I think I might be frickin’ gorgeous
My ass, especially
Might be frickin’ gorgeous
I wish I could show you my ass but I’m only 14
My ass has been described as “epic”
An “Epic Bottom”
Someone said that to me once. He said: “You have an Epic Bottom”
It sounds a little creepy now, but it didn’t sound creepy when he said it
Men like to stroke my ass when they see it
They pull me over their laps
And they stroke my ass
Like it were a talisman
Or a worry stone
Worn perfectly smooth and round
By time
Except it’s the opposite of time
I’m young
I just got popped out like this
Me and my perfect ass
Like two little deer droppings
Smooshed together
Frickin’ epic
Also I have a pretty face
I have a really nice face, I think
I really like my face
And I’m skinny so
Not that that’s a good thing!
But I am skinny
And a lot of people seem to like that
And I have great tits, so.
I feel really lucky
I feel really privileged or whatever
Let’s just admit it
I’m a frickin’ catch
I walk down the street and I feel everybody looking at me, you know
I’m not trying to brag
I’m serious. I promise. I’m not
I’m just trying to figure this out
I’m just trying to be real for a moment
I think it’s important to be real about things like this
Like sometimes people post pictures online
And all of there friends are like
Whoa. Gorgeous
Look at you girl. You could be a model. KaBOOM!!!!!
Why do people lie to people like that?
I’m serious
I don’t get it
Just say: That’s a great picture of you! Nice shot! You look great!
Not: “You’re gorgeous”
Not: “KaBOOM”
It’s like what exploded? Nothing exploded. I don’t see anything explosive about that picture.
Why are you pretending that something exploded?
I don’t get it
Just tell the truth

She’s off-track, she catches herself, she starts again…

BRITTANY
Here’s the other thing
I’m really frickin’ smart
I am. I’m smarter than most people I meet
I’m probably smarter than you
And not just liberal arts bullshit
I’m good at math
People are always like lollllllllll
I’m bad at math wahhh
Like that makes them cool
No it doesn’t
You suck at math
That doesn’t make you cool
Math makes you cool
It’s not that hard to be good at math
Math is actually the easiest section of the SAT to get a perfect score on, so
If you just study
It’s the most “study-able” section
So I guess you didn’t study
That doesn’t make you cool
That just makes you lazy and shortsighted about your future
Seriously people, it’s not that hard to be good at math if you frickin try
Are you even trying people???
“Wahhhh I’m bad at math”
Shut the fuck up and stop whining and just think about the problem for a minute
It’s not that hard
It’s not like you have to write a fucking poem
There are like rules
There’s like an answer
I don’t even have parents who can help me and I still ace it
Because I’m not a moron

She collects herself. A little nervous from saying all this out loud.
BRITTANY
Anyway. So I never say this stuff to anybody because I’m afraid they’re going to hate me. But I think about it sometimes. And sometimes it makes me feel ashamed. Like I’m a bad person. And I want to bury it down deep. Never acknowledge it. Keep my eyes on the pavement when I feel men looking at me and just pretend I don’t exist.

…
Like every time someone has ever told me that I’m beautiful I say: “No.”
…
This guy, he said to me, “You’re really beautiful” and I just said: “No.” It’s like a reflex
…

She shakes her head. No.

BRITTANY
But sometimes I wonder what would happen, if I really went for it
…
I mean, I’m a little afraid of what would happen if I really went for it
…
…
Over the course of the following, Brittany grows taller. Her shadow become 12-feet long. Her eyes turn red. Her fangs lengthen. Her voice becomes the voice of some vengeful, ancient pagan god. The girls stare at her in awe. The baby sexy robot music still humming…

BRITTANY
Like if I tried. If I really, really tried. Like if I acknowledged it. Just embraced it. Like if I walked down the street and looked those men straight in the eyes and said: “Yes, I’m beautiful and I got a perfect score on the SAT, Math, Reading and Writing, motherfucker, and yes I’m only fourteen years old now but just wait ten more years because one day I’m going to be a FUCKING SURGEON, one day I’m going to be a FUCKING GENIUS POET and running my own company, one day I’m going to be even more ridiculously attractive than I am now and GREAT AT SEX and a great fucking dresser and I’m going to cut people open like it’s my fucking job because it is my fucking job and I’m going to make you my bitch, you motherfucking cunt-munching piece of shit prick. I am your god. I am your second coming. I am your mother and I’m smarter than you and more attractive than you and better than you at everything that you love and you’re going to get down on your knees and worship my mind, my mind and my body and I’m gonna be the motherfucking KING of your motherfucking world, I’m going to be the KING OF EVERYBODY’S MOTHERFUCKING WORLD, and you’re going cum just by eating my cunt, the taste of my cum is going to make you cum because it’ll be the greatest sexual pleasure you have ever known just tasting me
and the words I say are going to be the greatest fucking words that you’ve ever heard and the things I do are going to be the greatest fucking things you’ve ever witnessed. That’s what I’ve got inside this tiny fucking body of mine and I don’t have to deny it I don’t have to disown it I don’t have to be ashamed of it I can shout it from the rooftops because you are all my motherfucking Bitch

She shrinks.

The lights snap back to fluorescents. The light of Heaven is gone.

Brittany stands alone, a little scared. A little exhausted. A little perplexed.

BRITTANY (a genuine question, she asks us)
What am I going to do with all this power?
...
What am I going to do with all this power?
...
Huh?
...

I don’t know.
...
...
...
...
...
...
I hope I don’t pussy out.

Maeve howls like a wolf.

9

Amina catches Zuzu after the run-through.

AMINA
Hey Zu
ZUZU
Yeah?

AMINA
How’s it going?

ZUZU
Oh. Um. Okay, I think

AMINA
You doing okay with the solo?

ZUZU
Yeah, I think so

AMINA
You looked really good out there

ZUZU
Really?

AMINA
Yeah your turns were really good. They were really centered

ZUZU
Yeah they felt good. I felt on top of myself

AMINA
You were really, really on top of yourself. And you looked clean

ZUZU
Okay good. I was worried

AMINA
Don’t be worried. You’re doing awesome

ZUZU
Thanks I need to work on my side aerial but—

AMINA
You’ll get it

ZUZU
Yeah
AMINA
It took me like two years to get my side aerial

ZUZU
Yeah

AMINA
You’ll definitely get it

ZUZU
I hope so

AMINA
For sure

They smile at each other.

ZUZU
Hey. You wanna come over? My mom’s making pizza

AMINA
Oh … I don’t think I can

ZUZU
Oh

AMINA
I just— I wanna get to bed early

ZUZU
Okay

AMINA
Sorry. I just—
I hate not sleeping before competitions

ZUZU
No, I get it. I hate not sleeping, too

They smile at each other.

ZUZU
You’re sure my turns were okay??????

AMINA
Zuzu
ZUZU
I’m sorry

AMINA
I love the way you turn

ZUZU
I love the way you turn! I wish I could turn like you

AMINA
Thanks

ZUZU
You just go so fast

AMINA
I don’t know

ZUZU
You do. It’s cool

They smile at each other.

AMINA
I really love the way you turn, too

10

The day of the competition.

All the girls in a different dressing room getting ready. They curl their hair, paint their faces like lotuses, apply fake eyelashes. Connie is dressed like Gandhi. Zuzu is in a bright red lotus costume, distinct from the other girls’ pink ones.

All the girls still have their fangs.

SOFIA
Maybe you’re just slow

CONNIE
Yeah, maybe you’re slow

SOFIA
Maybe you’re just a late bloomer, Amina
CONNIE
Yeah. Everyone’s on a different time frame

ZUUZU
(Hey Luke? Can you sew this into my head?)

LUKE
(Sure)

Luke sews a flower into Zuzu’s hair.

SOFIA
Maybe you’re like one of those babies that never talks
And their parents get all freaked out because they’re not talking
And think they’re autistic or whatever
And then all of a sudden
At like 4 years old
The baby just starts speaking complete sentences
The baby’s all like: “It hurts my feelings when you put me in the stroller”
And the parents are like: “Whoa! You’re talking! You have feelings!”

CONNIE
My niece was like that

SOFIA
I bet you’re not going to have any sex until you’re like thirty-five and then one day you’ll just explode with all these sexual feelings and you’ll be like way more sexual than the rest of us and we’ll all be married and you’ll be like a sexy, older women with all these lovers

CONNIE
Totally

AMINA
But I don’t want to wait until I’m thirty-five

MAEVE
Maybe it’s already happened
Maybe it just feels different for you
And you’ve already felt it
And you didn’t even know

Their faces are painted now – bright, freakish colors. They look like monster aliens with their little fangs.

CONNIE (appllying her eyelashes)
I remember this dude from Germany who used to visit my parents
I don’t even remember why he was there…
He was my parents’ friend?
He was German?
He was only in town for a short while
This was like 3 years ago
I don’t know
He would come and he would put his belly against my back and he would put his hand on my shoulder and he would sing along when I played the piano
Like is that normal?
I got very nervous that it wasn’t okay
But no one said anything about it
My parents saw him do it and everything
So I guess it was okay?

BRITTANY
Did you see his penis?

CONNIE
No!

BRITTANY
Then it’s fine

AMINA
I don’t know, I find it all very confusing

SOFIA
What’s confusing?

AMINA
I don’t know

MAEVE
I saw this penis once

BRITTANY
SOFIA
What? Was it romantic?

MAEVE
No

CONNIE
Was it your brother’s penis?

MAEVE
Never mind
SOFIA
Was it your dad’s penis?

MAEVE
I said, never mind!

DANCE TEACHER PAT *(entering)*
Hey girls how’s it going

ALL THE GIRLS AND LUKE
Good, Hi Dance Teacher Pat!, etc.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Are you ready to go?

ALL THE GIRLS AND LUKE
Yeah we’re ready, etc.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Let me see what you look like

They line up in their costumes, face paint, etc. They look good.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
You look good. Alright. Circle up

They do.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Now I know there’s a lot of pressure on you
But I want to take a minute
And I want you to close your eyes

They do.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
And I want you to forget about all the steps…
Everything we’ve worked on…
I want you to breathe in
…
…
…
And let it go

They do.
DANCE TEACHER PAT
I want you to think about all the people in the world
People who are struggling
People who aren’t as fortunate as you
People who don’t have nice parents like you do
People who don’t get to go to dance class or to school
Or have people to buy things for them
I want you to think about children
Other children
Who are suffering

Maeve suppresses a giggle.

MAEVE
(I’m sorry! I just get nervous when I have to close my eyes)

He glares at her.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Who don’t have anyone to turn to
Who are being abused
Who are living in garbage, literal garbage
Their beds, their houses
And no one touches them, no one loves them, no one wonders when they’re coming home at night or asks them how there day was

The girls are somber. Sofia is crying.

Amina and Connie have their eyes cracked open, a little skeptical. They catch each other’s eyes and smile.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
You girls don’t realize how lucky you are
You don’t realize that the things you struggle with
Are not actually a big deal
That the world is full of suffering
And you’re tasting only a tiny part of it
…
…
I want you to think about all the people in the world who are suffering
…
…
And I want you to go out there
…
…
And I want you to *dance for them*

They open their eyes. They all smile at each other – full of purpose, very powerful.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
You ready?

They are.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Knock ‘em dead

The girls and Luke run out the door in an impassioned flurry. Dance Teacher Pat calls after Zuzu.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Hey Zuzu

ZUZU
Yeah?

DANCE TEACHER PAT
…

Don’t let me down

She bolts to catch up with the other kids.

11

Backstage. The girls are nervous – shaking out their feet and hands.

Amina holds Zuzu by the neck, nose-to-nose. She coaches her.

AMINA
Just focus on your breath
Your breath and your feet
And remember to use your face

ZUZU
…

SOFIA
Guys
AMINA *(to Zuzu)*
You’ve got this

BRITTANY *(to Connie)*
Are you nervous?

CONNIE
No

BRITTANY
You’re gonna be great!

SOFIA
Guys

CONNIE
All I do is sit on a cushion

AMINA
Come on guys, let’s pray. *(indicating)* Connie.

They circle up and pray. Connie leads them.

CONNIE
Dear God
Please help us to do our best
And please help us to win
It’s been a hard week
And we’ve been working hard
And I know that a lot of us
Have a lot riding on this performance
So please help us
To shine
Please help us *all*
To be noticed
In our own special way
Like sometimes I feel like a fraud
Like I can’t deliver
Like I can’t do the touchdown in the last 2 minutes of the game
You know what I’m saying?

SOFIA
Guys…

CONNIE
And it’s hard because
I want to have an extraordinary life
I mean, I want us all to have an extraordinary life
But me too
I want it
I want it really bad
But I’m worried that my brain is weak, God
Because I get stressed out and stuff
Like I get very anxious
And I’m a self-sabotager
At least that’s what my mom says so
I know that I self-sabotage
BUT….
If there’s anyway for me to shine
Please help me – and all of us – to shine

BRITTANY
Connie

CONNIE
It’s sort of a bummer that I have a weak mind because maybe
If I didn’t have a weak mind I could actually like do it
I could be like a star or whatever

BRITTANY
Connie

CONNIE
Or if like I was really beautiful
That would be another way to do it

BRITTANY
………………………. Amen

EVERYBODY
Amen

SOFIA
Guys. I think there’s something wrong

Sofia pulls down her tights. There’s blood everywhere.

SOFIA
Oh no, oh no

BRITTANY
You’re fine! You’re fine!
MAN ON THE MICROPHONE
Girls, you’re up!

CONNIE
Oh my god, we’re doing it

ZUZU
I’m going to throw up

SOFIA
I can’t go out there!

BRITTANY
Sofia! Look at me! It’s only 2 minutes. You’re going to be fine

LUKE
I love you guys

CONNIE *(shaking out her hands, in the zone)*
Fuzz, fuzz, fuzz, fu-

Music. The girls strut onstage in their lotus costumes – a weird, robotic little strut – bellies sucked in, beads of sweat on their forehead, stiff smiles across their faces.

It begins. The Gandhi dance. Connie sits on her cushion. The girls dance as lotuses around her. Everything seems to be going well – the girls are in sync, smiling. Connie looks very serious on her cushion. Sofia is slowly bleeding through her tights… It’s almost time for the Spirit of Gandhi to break out and do her solo. Zuzu is pale and sweating. She gets slightly out of step with the lotuses. Amina watches her out of the corner of her eye, concerned. Zuzu steps forward, determined, ready to launch into the frenzied, fever dream that is her “special part.”

She goes into her first twirl sequence and executes it brilliantly. She smiles.

She flips across the stage – backwards aerial. She nails it. She’s feeling good. She’s feeling really good. She’s dancing. She’s not dancing – *she’s existing*. She’s in it. She’s grooving. She is possessed. She kicks her leg with great force – it sails up above her head and slices past her ear. But something’s off. She’s off-balance. She’s kicked her leg too hard. And her other leg – her supporting leg – slips out from under her like a bad leg on a chair. Zuzu falls. She bounces on her ass. She is stunned. She sits there for a half-second, totally overwhelmed.

ZUZU’S MOM *(from the audience)*
Get up, get up, get up!
Everything slows down. We’re watching the scene from outer space.

Zuzu gets up. Her face very pale. Her eyes glassy. Like a little wounded fawn that knows it’s about to die and is too stunned to move.

ZUZU’S MOM (from the audience)
She forgot it. Oh god, she forgot it

Zuzu is breathing so hard that we can see her rib cage go in-and-out, in-and-out.

ZUZU’S MOM (willing it)
Keep going!

Thunderous applause from the audience.

ZUZU’S MOM (slow-mo)
Keeeeeep goooooooooing!!!!!!!!

The entire audience joins in – huge, muffled, booming, slow-mo, space alien… is this even happening… They start chanting her name.

ZUZU’S MOM AND THE AUDIENCE
ZUZU! ZUZU! ZUZU! ZUZU! ZUZU! ZUZU! ZUZU!

Suddenly Amina snaps to life. Without missing a beat she leaps out of line with the lotuses and takes over Zuzu’s special part.

Zuzu backs up. She gets in line with the lotuses – sticking out in her Spirit of Gandhi costume. She backs up. Further, further further… Until her back is against the wall. A little red dot.

Amina dances as the Spirit of Gandhi, dressed like a lowly lotus. She is spectacular.

The dance ends. The girls exit, walking off-stage their chests heaving, rib-cages showing…

Connie grabs Amina by the arm.

CONNIE
What were you doing??????

AMINA
What’re you talking about?!

CONNIE
You should’ve given her a chance!
AMINA
She choked!

CONNIE
For a split second! She would have made it

AMINA
She choked, Connie, she choked

CONNIE
You didn’t even give her a second to recover, you just–

AMINA
I was saving the dance

CONNIE
You just jumped in front of her

AMINA
She fell down!

CONNIE
And she didn’t even have a second to recover
To catch her breath

AMINA
You don’t have a second
You don’t
A second is too long
You hesitate. You’re dead

CONNIE
You’re such a jerk

AMINA
I didn’t do anything wrong!
I just went off my instincts
I’m not going to apologize
For just reacting
I just–
I did it

CONNIE
…
AMINA
My body just–
I’m sorry
I would’ve waited for her
I would’ve waited for her forever
But
My body just–
...
It just went

12

In some forgotten corner of the auditorium…

Zuzu is lying facedown on nasty-ass carpet. Maeve sits beside her, holding her wolf cards.

MAEVE
Wanna see my wolf pack?

Zuzu doesn’t respond.

MAEVE
They’re called the Druids, that’s their pack name
My mom paid $25 and now I get their pictures in the mail
...
...
I can track them online, too, it’s pretty cool

ZUZU (into the carpet)
Cool

MAEVE
Yeah it’s pretty cool

ZUZU
...
...
...
...
...
...
Hey Maeve
MAEVE
Yeah

ZUZU
What do you want to do with your life?

MAEVE
I don’t know
Maybe astrophysics or something like that

ZUZU
Not dance?

MAEVE
Nah, I don’t think so
...
...
I want to do something cosmic, you know
...
...
I mean, I know that dance can be kind of cosmic
But I mean like actually cosmic
Like stars or volcanoes or something
...
...
...

ZUZU
Yeah I want to do something cosmic, too

MAEVE
Like black holes
Are so scary
And cool

ZUZU
Yeah

MAEVE
Hey Zuzu

ZUZU
Yeah

MAEVE
Can I ask you a question?
ZUZU (still into the carpet)
Yeah

MAEVE
Have you ever flown?

ZUZU
...
...
...
In a plane?

MAEVE
No
Like
...
...
In a room

ZUZU
I don’t think so

MAEVE
Oh

ZUZU
Have you?

MAEVE
I think I have
...
...
Like sometimes I concentrate on it
Really hard
And all of a sudden
I’m flying

ZUZU
In a room

MAEVE
Yeah

ZUZU
Like this one
MAEVE
It doesn’t have to be like / this one

ZUZU
But any room

MAEVE
Yes

ZUZU
…

MAEVE
…
…
…
It sort of washes over me. Like sleep. Like all of a sudden I notice my leg is falling asleep. And I feel it crawling up from the bottom of my feet and I’m like: Uh-oh. I’m about to fly again.
…
…
And then I hold my breath and let my eyes go soft focus and I try to concentrate on it but also I can’t concentrate on it too hard or else it goes away. I have to sort of concentrate on it sideways, you know?
…
…

ZUZU
…

MAEVE
And then I just sort of float away. And I’m constantly in danger of crashing to the ground if I don’t keep my mind in the right place. But if I do, if I do keep my mind in the right place then I just sort of float to the top of the room and sit there

ZUZU
That’s amazing

MAEVE
And sometimes when I’m at the top of stairs
My body just takes off
And I just glide down
Like I’m a ghost
And I always think
Oh my god
This is the end
I’m about to fall down the stairs and break my neck
But then I just float down and I’m fine

ZUZU

…

MAEVE
And one time I flew over the Cascade Mountains. Maybe I was dreaming. But I just went out the window. And I was flying belly down and over the mountains. Like right over the face of them. And I saw all their crags and crevices and pockmarks like I was looking into their faces. I don’t know how I could’ve seen the mountains’ faces if I hadn’t been actually flying like that.

ZUZU
I’ve never flown before. Not even in my dreams. The only thing like that that’s ever happened to me is sometimes I wake up and it feels like I’m falling through the bed.

    Amina appears in the doorway, a giant crown on her head.

AMINA
Hey

MAEVE
Hey

ZUZU

…

MAEVE
Nice crown

AMINA
Oh, thanks

…

…

I won a special award for my solo

    She looks at Zuzu lying facedown on the carpet.

AMINA
Is she okay?

    Maeve shrugs.

MAEVE
We’re just talking
AMINA
...
...
...
Zuzu?
...
...
...
I just wanted to check on you and make sure that you were okay
...
And make sure you knew
That it wasn’t your fault that we didn’t win the group dance
...
...
Zuzu doesn’t respond.

MAEVE
I think she just needs some time and space

AMINA *(smiling weakly)*
Okay
...
...
...
Bye Maeve

MAEVE
Bye

Amina exits.

ZUZU
...
...
...
...
...
...
Is she gone?

MAEVE
Yeah
Zuzu gets up. She looks like death. Her eyes are bloodshot. She wipes her eyes, the snot off her face. She splashes water on her face.

MAEVE
Hey Zu. Don’t tell anyone I told you that.

ZUZU
Huh?

MAEVE
About the flying

ZUZU
I won’t

MAEVE
I don’t want people asking me questions

ZUZU
I won’t tell, I promise

…

…

…

Zuzu looks in the mirror. She plays with her lips, her fangs.

MAEVE
And one day I’ll forget that I ever used to fly. Because the truth is – I did. I did actually have the power to fly. Or to float, or whatever. But somehow, along the way I forgot about it. I forgot all about it. It was the coolest thing I ever did. And I forgot it. I forgot it ever happened. On multiple occasions. It happened. And I forgot.

ZUZU (looking in the mirror)
I want to make myself throw up but I don’t know how to do it

…

…

…

…
Maeve?

Maeve comes back.

ZUZU
Maeve

MAEVE
Yes

ZUZU
You wanna know something?

MAEVE
Yes

ZUZU
I knew I was gonna fall before I fell
I don’t know why
My leg just didn’t work
And I knew it
Before it even stopped working

MAEVE *(smiling apologetically)*
I’m sorry

ZUZU
It’s okay

MAEVE
…
…
…
Hey Zuzu?

ZUZU
Yeah

MAEVE
I think I have to go find my Mom now

ZUZU
That’s fine
MAEVE
It’s getting pretty late
...
...
Are you okay?

ZUZU
Yeah I’m fine.

She smiles at her.

ZUZU
I’m totally fine
I’m just going to stay here and–

MAEVE
Okay

Maeve exits. Zuzu stands there – still smeared with face paint and blood from her arm. She closes her eyes. She holds her breath. She concentrates.

She throws herself into the wall. She throws herself into the wall again.

ZUZU
...
...
...
...
...
...
...
...
...
Ow

13

Amina under the moon, etc. Sofia in the bathroom, scrubbing her bloody tights.

AMINA
I wonder if you ever really feel good enough
...
Like I wonder if there are people out there who deep down, secretly really do feel good enough
...
Like yeah!
This is my life!
Yeah!
I’m a hot tamale!
I wonder if there are people out there in this universe who ever feel like they have enough. Like yeah, this is enough for me. Like yeah, I’m happy and this is enough and these are my dreams.

SOFIA’S MOM
Honey?

AMINA
What if nothing in this world is good enough for me?

SOFIA’S MOM
Honey? Are you in there?

AMINA
What if I could have the whole universe and I was like: more! more! more! Like the universe was ice cream: more! more! more!

SOFIA’S MOM
Is everything alright?

SOFIA
I’m fine

SOFIA’S MOM
It’s time for dinner

SOFIA
I’m taking a shower

SOFIA’S MOM
Okay. Well. When you’re done, we’d love for you to come to dinner

SOFIA
…

SOFIA’S MOM
We’re excited to hear about your day. Your dad wants to hear about the competition and–

SOFIA
**MOM! I AM TAKING A FREAKIN SHOWER!! CAN I NOT HAVE TWO MINUTES PEACE WITHOUT SOMEONE INVADING ME! JESUS CHRIST!**
SOFIA’S MOM
...
...
Okay, well. When you’re done. We’re excited to talk to you

SOFIA
Okay

SOFIA’S MOM
I’ll make sure your brothers don’t eat all of the tater tots

SOFIA
Okay
...
Thanks Mom
...
...
...
I love you

Amina under the moon...

AMINA
The other day my friend Samantha’s Mom died and she texted me (well, it was a group text but I was part of the group text) to tell me that her Mom had died. And it was a very sweet text. But it was weird because it kind of made me feel happy? Like I didn’t mean for it to make me feel happy! But then I was like: Oh my gosh! I feel happy. Like something important had actually happened that day. But then the thing is (as terrible as that is, something even more terrible happened)… The thing is that I sat there feeling kind of happy for a moment. Or not happy…just like something in me was stirring. Emotion or something. Life. And then the feeling faded. And I was like: Okay, what’s next! Who else is going to text me? Who else is going to write me a letter?
...
Like whenever I get a love letter these days my response is always: more! more! more!
...
...
It’s like Thanksgiving where you’re supposed to eat a big breakfast because somehow that stretches your stomach and then you can actually eat a big lunch
...
My heart is all stretched out from all the feelings. All the stimulations. And I just want more. I just want more. Immediately after I get something good. I just want more.

Sofia still scrubbing her tights. Amina turns out the light.
Daybreak, afternoon, the girls climbing up the stairs to the dance studio.

Connie and Brittany in the dressing room drinking afternoon coffee. They’re avoiding putting on their dance clothes.

Amina enters, still wearing her huge ass crown.

AMINA
Hey

BRITTANY
Hey

AMINA
Hey Connie

CONNIE *(teasing, not unfriendly)*
Hey, hey! It’s the star

AMINA
I’m not the star

CONNIE
You are. You are the star

AMINA
I’m not

CONNIE
No, Amina. Honestly, it’s okay, it’s cool, I’m sorry I was a jerk, you are

BRITTANY
It’s not bad. It’s not bad to be the star

AMINA
...

CONNIE
Don’t lie about it

AMINA
I’m not lying
CONNIE
At least don’t lie about it
At least *be honest*

AMINA
I still lose sometimes

CONNIE
Sometimes

AMINA
And it really sucks when I lose because there’s a lot of pressure on me
It’s really embarrassing
…
…
Like you guys lose all the time. Whatever
But if I lose–

BRITTANY
That’s really mean

AMINA
What?

BRITTANY
You’re being really mean

AMINA
I’m just being honest

BRITTANY
No you’re being mean

AMINA
I’m just saying…
That the stakes / *are higher* for me

BRITTANY
Okay

AMINA
What? You said to be honest. I’m not allowed to be honest

BRITTANY
Have fun with all your crowns
AMINA
What?

BRITTANY
I said: HAVE FUN WITH ALL YOUR CROWNS
...
...
...
INSTEAD OF FRIENDS
...
...
...
ALL YOU HAVE IS CROWNS
...
...
...
SO HAVE FUN WITH THEM

Amina exits into the dance studio. Connie and Brittany sip their coffee.

Zuzu climbs up the stairs. She heads straight into the studio, wearing her street clothes and tennis shoes. Amina is in a corner warming up.

Zuzu approaches Dance Teacher Pat.

ZUZU
I think I’m quitting dance

DANCE TEACHER PAT
...
...
...
You know, if you quit, you can never come back

ZUZU
I know

DANCE TEACHER PAT
I’m not just talking about logistics, Zuzu
I’m talking about your body
You are training your body right now
And if you quit
Your body will go through puberty and change
And it will be impossible for you
To get it back
ZUZU

...  

DANCE TEACHER PAT
You won’t be able to change your mind

ZUZU
I know

The girls sip coffee in the dressing room.

CONNIE
Drinking black coffee makes me feel like a Mom

BRITTANY
Drinking black coffee makes me feel like a Cowboy

Maeve enters

MAEVE
Hey

CONNIE/BRITTANY
Hey


LUKE
Hey

CONNIE/BRITTANY
Hey

LUKE
Where’s Amina?

CONNIE
She’s already in there

Zuzu comes in from the studio.

ZUZU
See you later

CONNIE
Where are you going?
ZUZU
I’m taking the day off

LUKE
I’m coming with you

They go.

Amina dancing in the studio. Dance Teacher Pat watches her.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Amina

AMINA
What?

DANCE TEACHER PAT
You’re holding back

AMINA
No I’m not

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Don’t worry about them liking you
Just Dance
Unleash

AMINA
I am unleashing

DANCE TEACHER PAT
No you’re not.
…
Where are your shoes?!

AMINA
I forgot my dance bag

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Amina

AMINA
What???
DANCE TEACHER PAT
What’s going on with you?

AMINA
Nothing

She dances.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Stop

She does.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Look at me

She does.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
You’re not like the other girls here

…

…

You know that right?

Amina shrugs.

DANCE TEACHER PAT
You’re very, very special

AMINA

…

…

…

I know

DANCE TEACHER PAT
Good

…

…

…

Then dance like it

The girls still in the dressing room, drinking coffee, not getting dressed.

BRITTANY
Life is strange
And hard

CONNIE
But there’s a lot you can get through

BRITTANY
But there’s also scar tissue
That’s the balance
You don’t want to build up too much scar tissue

They sip their coffee.

BRITTANY
You say things that you don’t believe sometimes
They just come out of your mouth
I don’t know why
And sometimes they haunt you
And sometimes they don’t

CONNIE
That’s because you’re a sensitive person, Britt
You’re a sensitive, thoughtful person

BRITTANY
…
…
…
…
…
No

In the studio.

AMINA (to Dance Teacher Pat)
Sometimes I think I want to lose
Like I actually think I want to lose
Like I close my eyes and I say:
God. It’s okay, if I lose
I don’t mind this time
But then I get up on that stage
And they take the trophies out
And when they take the trophies out
It’s like I get the taste of metal in my mouth
And all of a sudden, all I want is to win
I want to win so bad
I just like, *pray for it*

**DANCE TEACHER PAT**
I don’t think you have to feel bad about that

**AMINA**
But I’m happy if someone else wins
Genuinely
I’m happy

  Zuzu and Luke climbing up a hill, afternoon sunshine.

**LUKE**
Zuzu?

**ZUZU**
Yeah?

**LUKE**
How do you want to lose your virginity?

**ZUZU**
Huh?

**LUKE**
How do you want it to happen

**ZUZU**
Oh

**LUKE**
Do you know?

**ZUZU**
Oh. Yeah

**LUKE**
You do?

**ZUZU**
Oh yeah

**LUKE**
Will you tell me?

  She looks at him.
ZUZU
Well there’s two versions of the story.

LUKE
...

ZUZU
In one version I’m an enchantress. Like an enchantress, enchantress. Like I’m actually an enchantress. (Don’t tell anyone this.) Like Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe style. Like somebody comes and gets me through the cupboard and is like: Dude! You’re an enchantress. And I go off into this magical world. And I get to live whole lifetimes there as a queen and an enchantress but then I can come back to earth and no time has passed.

LUKE
...

ZUZU
So that’s one version.

LUKE
Uh-huh

ZUZU
And the other is that I’m an enchantress in a movie

LUKE
Oh

ZUZU
And he’s my

LUKE
Co-star

ZUZU
Leading man

LUKE
Cool

ZUZU
He’s Welsh
I don’t know why he’s Welsh he’s just always been Welsh
Theodore

LUKE
That’s his name?

ZUZU
Yup. Theodore. I don’t know why. I don’t even like that name. It just came to me

LUKE
In a dream?

ZUZU
I don’t know. It just came. And we fall in love

LUKE
How do you fall in love?

ZUZU
What?

LUKE
How does that happen? How do you fall in love?

ZUZU
We just are

LUKE
Automatically

ZUZU
Well not automatically

LUKE
Like how do you know?

ZUZU
Um

LUKE
That you’re in love. Like how does that happen?
ZUZU
I think it’s just like we meet each other. And we feel like we’ve known each other before. Like in past lives. Like we’re old souls when we’re together and he’s known me forever so falling in love is really just like remembering or like catching up to what we already were…you know?

Does that make sense?


LUKE

…

So what happens?

ZUZU

So anyway we fall in love and we get engaged and we buy an apartment. In New York City! And after we’ve bought our apartment—

LUKE

How old are you?

ZUZU

I don’t know. Twenty-three?

So we go there one day – during the day, before we’ve moved in – just to you know plan out how we’re going to lay out all the furniture in the house. And it’s just a big empty apartment. And we get to decide where all the chairs go. And all the tables. And all the cups. And it’s just like bliss. And he leads me through the apartment by my hands. And sunlight is streaming through the windows. And he lays me down on the floor – and it’s a hardwood floor. And it’s kinda warm because of all the sunlight. And my back is on the warm, hardwood floor. And we lose our virginities to each other. And as he, um, enters me. I open my eyes. And he opens his eyes. And this sounds crazy but our souls kind of touch through our eyes and like. Just for a moment. We become one being.

They sit on the sidewalk.

LUKE

Are you guys married?

She shakes her head.

ZUZU

No, we’re engaged

…

…

But then you know what’s funny

Sometimes—
And not all the time
But sometimes–
I keep thinking for a little bit
And do you know what happens? In my mind?

LUKE
No

ZUZU
It’s like five years later
(This is crazy)
But it’s like five years later
And I have these two beautiful children
Two beautiful daughters
And he dies

LUKE
He dies?

ZUZU
Yeah. I don’t know exactly how. Maybe a car crash. But he dies
And we’re like living in the country. The country outside of New York City. With a trellis. And
he dies. And I have these two beautiful babies. And then one day someone comes to visit me. He
drives all the way to visit me. And when his car pulls up into my driveway, I go outside to
welcome him. And I’ve got like one baby on my hip. And one baby by the hand. And I’m
standing under the trellis. Just saying: hello. And then I take him inside. And I make him just the
most beautiful lunch. Just the most beautiful lunch you’ve ever seen. With like cheese. And
olives. And beautiful salads and things like that. And we sit on the floor. And the babies fall
asleep. And afterwards we drink coffee.

LUKE
That sounds nice

ZUZU
And do you know who that someone is???

LUKE
No?

ZUZU
It’s Dance Teacher Pat.

She laughs and laughs.

ZUZU
Isn’t that weird!
I don’t know why it’s him. But it is. It is.

The girls in the dress room…

Sofia enters with Amina’s brother right behind her.

SOFIA
Hey guys

MAEVE/BRITTANY/CONNIE
Hey

SOFIA
Look who I found downstairs

AMINA’S BROTHER
Hi

BRITTANY
Who are you?

AMINA’S BROTHER
I’m Amina’s brother

ALL THE GIRLS
…

AMINA’S BROTHER
She forgot her dance shoes

BRITTANY
Oh

CONNIE
Oh

AMINA’S BROTHER
My mom made me bring them to her. You know where she is?

BRITTANY
In the studio

AMINA’S BROTHER
Oh.
They creep towards the studio and watch Amina dance. The girls are transfixed.

AMINA’S BROTHER
You think I can go in there?

Amina’s brother turns to us.

AMINA’S BROTHER
I don’t care about dance. I don’t care. I think the only people who care about dance are people who actually care about dance...

... And that is not that many people...

... I’m not talking about social dancing. I’m talking about DANCE. Who cares? Not me...

... You could be the most famous dancer in the entire world and I would not be impressed at all. I wouldn’t even know who you were because I don’t give a fuck about dance. And I don’t know many people who do, frankly.

... Like you’re a famous opera singer. Who cares!

... That’s the thing about the world. It’s so big that you can always be anonymous. Like I’ve done some pretty bad things on the Internet. And some days I like freak out thinking maybe somebody is going to find out all the bad things I’ve done. And I get really anxious. And I’m like: Oh no, my life is about to be ruined! I mean. At some point my life will be ruined, if somebody finds out. And let’s face it. It’s 2015. Somebody’s going to find out at some point because we’re all naked before technology, you know what I’m saying, so it’s just a matter of time before my life is ruined. And that makes me panic and get anxious, like I said, but. BUT. Then I think......................... There’s always gonna be some place in the world that I can go and be anonymous. Libya maybe. Or even Japan. France. If you really look at the list of all the countries in the world, there are so many place I could go and start over. And ALSO.

MOREOVER.................................................There will always be some person in the world who doesn’t hate me. Like the world is so big, there’s gotta be one person in the world who doesn’t hate me. Like even if I tell them the worst thing I’ve ever done, they’d be like: That’s fine. I don’t really mind. Like even if you do awful, awful things like put babies on spikes or something there’s going to be some person, somewhere who’s like: That’s okay. I don’t mind. And that makes me feel a lot better about things. That always makes me feel a lot, a lot better when I’m feeling anxious about the things I’ve done.

...
How did I get here? ......................... Oh yeah. Dance. Who cares! You could be the worst dancer in the world and I could still fall in love with you just as well as I could fall in love with someone who’s the best. Or hate you. Either way. I don’t care at all. About dance.

BRITTANY (snapping us back)
Hey? Hey! You want me to give her the shoes?

AMINA’S BROTHER
Oh. Uh. Sure. Thanks

BRITTANY
No problem

He gives Brittany the shoes and bolts outside.

Brittany and the girls watch Amina dance…

BRITTANY
You think it’s okay to interrupt?

CONNIE
I don’t know–

SOFIA
Just go in there–

MAEVE
Shhh

Amina dancing.
Amina dancing.
Amina dancing.

AMINA (chanting as she dances, pagan, etc.)
I’m gonna win
I’m gonna win
I’m gonna win

She has her crown.
She has her fangs.

The other girls form an alien chorus led by Brittany. They counter Amina. They grow 12 feet tall.
When I was a little girl
I looked at my pussy
And even though
It was the first pussy
That I ever, ever saw
I knew in my bones
That no one could have
A pussy as perfect as mine

And surely a person
With such perfect genitals
Is destined for greatness

It’s written in the stars
And here’s the thing about pussies
That they never, ever tell you
They’re ageless! They’re ageless!
Don’t listen to their lies

Unless you have a baby
Your pussy stays the same!
My pussy is perfect
And it’ll stay that way FOREVER

I’ll never forget
The day I first saw it
My perfect, perfect pussy
I knew in my bones
That no one could have
A pussy as perfect as mine
And surely a person
With such perfect genitals
Is destined for greatness
It’s written in the stars
I wish that my body
Were as perfect as my pussy
I wish that my face
Were as perfect as my pussy
I wish that my soul
Were as perfect as my pussy
I wish that my soul!
Were as perfect as my pussy!
I wish that my soul!
Were as perfect as my pussy!
I wish that my soul!
Were as perfect as my pussy!
I wish that my soul were as perfect! perfect! perfect! Prrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr
Amina dances, she dances, she dances. She is athletic, vicious, stunning. She absolutely dominates. She turns out to us. She hisses. She gnashes her fangs.

End of play.