

GAME ON

Written by

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THIRD DRAFT

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GAME ON

OPEN ON:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

An UNSEEN YOUNG WOMAN packs in a hurry. She's throwing dresses, jewelry and every last stitch of make-up into suitcases.

As her high heels make their way out, we work our way through her apartment. It's cleaned out, except for the only thing she left behind, on her bare mattress: A DEVIL GIRLS UNIFORM.

As we CLOSE-UP on the logo...

SMASH TO:

INT. AHSHA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

CLOSE-UP on the same logo, but this time it's in a picture frame, worn by a young woman in the '80s.

AHSHA PERRY (22, African American) pushes it aside on the mantle for more mirror. She's doing some rushing of her own, simultaneously buttoning her blouse and applying lipstick.

AHSHA

My biggest strength is my passion. I give one hundred percent to everything I do.

Her mother SLOANE (early 40s) appears behind her in the mirror.

SLOANE

Easy on the lipstick, Ahsha, you're interviewing at a bank, not a brothel.

Ahsha blots as Sloane buttons Ahsha's top blouse button and puts a suit jacket on her.

SLOANE (cont'd)

Okay, your biggest weakness?

AHSHA

Sometimes I'm too passionate.

(then)

How is being too passionate a weakness again?

SLOANE

It's better than saying you steal.

AHSHA

If you don't want me to have what's in your purse, don't leave it open on your desk.

Sloane's smile fades.

AHSHA (cont'd)

Oh come on, that was funny.

SLOANE

(taking her in)

I'm sorry Ahsha, I just...this is what we worked for. You, in that suit, with your degree, heading out into the world. It's the first day of the rest of your life.

AHSHA

Why does this feel like a tampon commercial?

SLOANE

(swats her)

Make jokes. For where I was when I had you, you could've turned out a whole lot different.

AHSHA

You act like you were sleeping on a dirty mattress in a crack den. You were an original Devil Girl.

Ahsha picks up the photo. It's Sloane. She handles it like a holy artifact.

AHSHA (cont'd)

(wistfully)

I wish I got to see you perform live.

Sloane takes the picture and puts it back on the mantle.

SLOANE

Professional basketball was no place for children. It was barely a place for grown women. Leaving that behind was the smartest thing I ever did.

AHSHA

Things change. It could be totally different now.

(then)

You know, they're holding try-outs for this year's Devil Girls today.

SLOANE

I think I'm a little past the age cut-off.

Not really where Ahsha was going with that.

SLOANE (cont'd)

Now, I got you this interview, if you're late I will beat your ass so help me Jesus.

(off Ahsha's faded smile,
comforting)

I'll take off my rings.

Ahsha snaps herself out of it as a car horn BLARES.

AHSHA

That's German.

She hugs her mom and heads out.

SLOANE

You got this!

INT. GERMAN'S GREMLIN - MORNING

Ahsha gets in, kisses GERMAN (22, Mexican). Sweet, soulful, he absolutely knows what he has in Ahsha. And vice versa.

GERMAN

You look...interviewy.

AHSHA

I look like a black Nancy Grace.

He pulls away from the house.

GERMAN

So where to Nancy?

A beat. She takes a folded well-worn piece of paper from her pocket. She's not bold enough to do more than leave it open on her lap. It's a Devil Girls flyer, announcing AUDITIONS.

GERMAN (cont'd)

(as unsure as she is)
You're doing it?

AHSHA

I don't know. I don't know I don't know.
The first day of the rest of my life
might be my last if my mother found out.
But I've wanted this since...I don't
remember not wanting this.

(MORE)

AHSHA (cont'd)

(then)

Tell me what to do.

GERMAN

Well, the captain of the basketball team you cheered to division champs wants you to go for it. Being a Devil Girl would be bomb.

AHSHA

What does the high school gym teacher want me to do?

GERMAN

He kind of wants to see you in the little outfit too. But it's not my decision any more than it is your mom's.

He arrives at the corner. Left or right? An agonizing beat. Her eyes catch the mini-Devils basketball hanging from his keychain.

Finally, she flips his directional left. They both lock eyes. Left it is.

EXT. DEVILS STADIUM - MORNING

A line of HOT TWENTYSOMETHING WOMEN stretches around the block, all desperate for their shot at fame.

A REPORTER comes to us from the frontlines.

REPORTER

(to camera)

It's that time again, the annual open call for the Los Angeles Devil Girls. The premier dance team in professional basketball, Devil Girls are celebrities in their own right, tantalizing fans in the nosebleeds on down to the movie stars, recording artists and politicians in the front row. Some have even gone on to become megastars in their own right, from Grammy winners and supermodels to choreographers and fashion moguls. Some little girls love to play with them--

(holds up a Devil Girls Barbie)

--but these women behind me dream of being them. And they've come from all over the country for their chance to make that dream a reality.

Behind her, hopefuls ham for the camera.

MARISSA (25, White), a giant ball of energy, smiles and waves frantically at the camera before dropping into a split.

KYLE (25, White), sex on legs, does a twirl in a crazy-short skirt then runs up and kisses the camera.

NEARBY

Sizing up the crowd, current captain JELENA HOWARD (27, African American). Already in a Devil Girls warm-up jacket, she is the Barbie doll. Literally.

OLIVIA (O.S.)
Survey says?

Former Devil Girl-turned-basketball wife OLIVIA MICHAELS (40, white) joins her. Everything about her reeks excess, from her \$80,000 Dolce & Gabbana sunglasses to her custom made Christian Louboutins.

JELENA
I haven't seen this many orange midgets outside of a chocolate factory.

OLIVIA
You know we have to groom them, Jelena. Bad tans and bad hair are fixable. It's what's underneath that we're looking for. Diamonds in the rough.

JELENA
That's fine, I just wish I didn't need a Hepatitis shot before doing it.

Olivia just shakes her head.

OLIVIA
You're going to have to oversee the makeovers with Mia gone.

Jelena looks at her blankly.

OLIVIA (cont'd)
She took off. Packed up her apartment, cleaned out her locker. The only thing she left was this.

Olivia hands her a bag. Jelena pulls out Mia's uniform.

JELENA
Wow. I knew she was struggling, but...

OLIVIA
Really? I didn't.

JELENA

I'm captain, it's my job to know.

OLIVIA

Well now it's my job to replace her. You know how hard that's going to be? She has over a million Twitter followers, she's a star.

JELENA

Not the star. And she was never going to be if she couldn't hack it.

It's all very civil, but it's clear the only thing Jelena and Olivia can trust in their relationship is that each one needs the other.

OLIVIA

You could go a little easier on them.

JELENA

I could. But then the line wouldn't be this long.

OLIVIA

The line is this long because I took shaking my ass in the second row in a half empty stadium and turned it into a fifty million dollar industry.

JELENA

(assuaging her)

You don't want your cash cow jeopardized, I get it.

OLIVIA

I'm married to a Devil. I don't need cash. I need to know I'm not sending girls to slaughter the minute I sign them. If I'm going to have the best we can't be chasing them away.

JELENA

Don't worry, Olivia. You have the best.

Jelena smiles, hands her back the bag and moves on. Olivia just surveys the crowd. She's got her work cut out for her.

EXT. DEVILS STADIUM - PARKING LOT - MORNING

German pulls up. He and Ahsha see the mass of people. They both just gawk.

GERMAN

I can throw it in reverse and leave
nothing but a skid mark.

So tempting. She looks at him. Then back at the stadium.

INT. DEVILS STADIUM - GYM - MORNING

Olivia's front and center before the gathered masses. They buzz over her presence, and the presence of the giant rock on her finger. She's offered a bullhorn. Not necessary.

OLIVIA

Ladies! Welcome. I know you're nervous. I was nervous when I tried out. Push through it. This is your moment to show everyone what you've got. Make this moment count.

They fan out, as Ahsha enters. She's thoroughly intimidated by her surroundings.

AHSHA

(steadies herself, to Olivia)
Hi, I'm--

Olivia just slaps a number on her chest and walks on.

Okay then.

CUT TO:

A MONTAGE. Girls stripped down to barely there outfits are made to sweat as Olivia puts them through serious paces. Ahsha's in the thick of it.

OLIVIA

Up and out, up and out, you in the back,
keep up or step out, 1, 2, 3 no no no,
back line in the red--

She doesn't even need to make eye contact as her assistant heads to the back to pull the girl from the line-up.

GLIMPSES of more cuts as the weakest are weeded out, the ones who don't hit it as hard, who don't have "the look."

Ahsha's already sweating like a pig. But so far she's keeping up.

OLIVIA (cont'd)

These are simple steps. If you're having any trouble do yourself a favor and tap out now.

The Reporter is there filming, Jelena by her side.

REPORTER

I'm with Devil Girls captain Jelena Howard. Jelena, what's your role here today?

JELENA

(as phony as can be)
I'm here as a cheerleader for them. I live and die for the Devil Girls and I'm just here to lend all these girls my love and support.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

I LOVE YOU JELENA!!!

JELENA

(smiles)
I love you too!

Jelena feigns embarrassment, but she eats the attention up.

Until it's taken away.

REPORTER

(looking off)
Wow she's good.

The camera man shoots beyond Jelena. To Ahsha, dancing. She's raw, but with that million dollar smile, you can see her star quality. Jelena sees it. And she doesn't like it.

MORE auditioning as the ranks deplete. One STAND-OUT lands hard on a flip - and crashes to the ground. Her ankle swells as, her dreams crushed, she's carried out in tears.

The dozens of girls who are left are drenched, broken, battered.

OLIVIA

Ladies.

Olivia gathers her things, heads for the door.

The girls murmur.

AHSHA

So...what?

OLIVIA

(turning back)
Thanks for coming.

With that, she's gone.

The girls look to each other, drowning in uncertainty. Ahsha more than anyone.

INT. AHSHA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Ahsha arrives home, dressed in her interview suit. Sloane looks over from making dinner. She mutes Judge Judy.

SLOANE

I hope it was worth it.

AHSHA

(beat)

What was worth it?

SLOANE

Being gone all day. It takes less effort to rob a bank. Did you get it?

AHSHA

There were a lot of people interviewing.

SLOANE

(going for the phone)

I'll just call Maxine.

AHSHA

(quickly)

No!

(then)

I'm an adult. I need to take it from here.

SLOANE

You're right. You're right. Go change, you're sweatier than Whitney Houston after the third encore.

Ahsha smiles. Thanks.

INT. AHSHA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ahsha starts the shower and slides out of her suit.

AHSHA

(calling out to her mother)

I smell mashed potatoes. Did you make fried chicken?

(then, to herself)

I would kill for two piece and a biscuit right about now. Two piece, a biscuit, and a mouthful of Vicodin.

She steps in the shower.

WOMAN'S VOICE

(muffled)

--Some little girls love to play with them...dream of being them...

Ahsha cocks her ear. Who is that?

WOMAN'S VOICE (cont'd)

And they've come from all over the country for their chance to make that dream a reality.

Suddenly, Ahsha's bolt upright. She grabs a towel and races back into the kitchen sopping wet.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ahsha arrives just in time to see herself on the TV screen, frozen mid-leap behind Jelena. Oblivious to the camera.

Sloane's in shock. Which swiftly turns to rage.

AHSHA

I can explain.

SLOANE

Did I have a stroke? Am I having one now?

AHSHA

Working at a bank isn't my dream.

SLOANE

It's nobody's dream. But it's what you do. It's what people do.

AHSHA

It's not what you did.

SLOANE

Did you think I was joking when I said I was lucky to get out? That is a wild world.

AHSHA

And I'm just a little girl.

SLOANE

(unwilling to go there)

We worked so hard to get you through school.

AHSHA

I know, do you know how many overnights
I had to pull just so I could be captain
of the cheerleaders?

SLOANE

Oh, that's why you went!

AHSHA

It was for me.

Sloane's stopped.

AHSHA (cont'd)

You got to dance in front of twenty
thousand people. You got to live your
dream. This was my shot. I took it.

SLOANE

Ahsha--

AHSHA

You can relax. There were like a hundred
other girls there by the end.

SLOANE

...you made it to the end?

AHSHA

They're not going to call me.

SLOANE

(beat)

Ahsha, your cell rang while you were in
the shower.

A beat. Ahsha reaches into her purse on the table.

AHSHA

It was probably German.

She digs it out, then reads the caller ID. Sloane doesn't
have to ask. Ahsha dials her voicemail, then listens.
Finally, she hangs up.

AHSHA (cont'd)

They picked thirty girls to come back
tomorrow.

(beat, then)

I'm one of them.

Neither of them knows how to respond. Ahsha's really hanging
on for Sloane. Finally--

SLOANE
(not wanting to be cruel)
I guess if this is your shot, you better
take it.

Ahsha smiles wide, then hugs her mother.

AHSHA
(her emotions pouring out)
This is insane! What should I do? How
should I dress?

SLOANE
For battle. The final stage of try-outs
is against the current squad.

AHSHA
What are you talking about?

SLOANE
Devil Girls have to re-audition every
year. They'll be there tomorrow. There
are 16 spots, and they're not going to
give theirs up without a fight.

In one swift turn, Ahsha goes from absolutely elated to
absolutely terrified.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. DEVILS STADIUM - CORRIDOR - MORNING

Olivia, on her way in, finds COACH DAVENPORT (40s, walking intimidation) on his way out. Fried by life, he has a low tolerance for bullshit. Which is why he's making a run for it.

OLIVIA

Pete, the entrance to the gym is this way.

COACH DAVENPORT

There is no point in my being here.

OLIVIA

Your judging finals is brilliant PR. You're a former All-Star coming back to coach your old team. It's great promotion for you, enjoy it.

She walks him toward the gym.

COACH DAVENPORT

(not so fast)

They're not promoting me, they're not even promoting basketball. This is about the dancers, which have gotten completely out of control. They've become mass marketed blow-up dolls and they're killing the sport.

OLIVIA

They have bigger fan bases than some of your starters.

COACH DAVENPORT

I took this job because I care about the game--

OLIVIA

You took this job because your wife is bleeding you dry in the divorce. Come on, the quicker you're in, the quicker you're out.

COACH DAVENPORT

I don't know anything about dancing. I didn't even dance at my wedding.

OLIVIA

And look where that got you.

She opens the door and holds it for him. In or out? Finally, grudgingly, he enters.

INT. DEVILS STADIUM - GYM - MORNING

Our finalists wipe the sleep from their eyes as they change into their dance outfits, stretch and warm up. All eyes are on the far corner, where the vets are camped out.

WITH THE VETS

They're all wearing Devil Girls colors to set them apart. And intimidate the newbies. Among them, RAQUEL (26, Latina), as emotional as a telenovela heroine and twice as drama plagued.

RAQUEL
(to Jelena)
Mia's gone? When?

JELENA
Last night. Took off like Toni Braxton
from the IRS.

The other girls didn't know either. They're all shocked. Among them, DESIREE and LEXI. Desiree is impossibly gifted by God and Lexi is impossibly gifted by a half-dozen plastic surgeons. Both exist to back up Jelena.

RAQUEL
I can't believe this.
(beat, surveying the new girls)
You think any of them could replace her?

JELENA
Mia? No.

The implication being, Raquel possibly. Jelena smiles. Her brand of friendship can sting like hell.

Olivia steps from behind the JUDGE'S DESK.

OLIVIA
(rounding them up)
Ladies.

Dozens of hearts in throats. They make their way over, among them bubbly Marissa and southern fried Kyle, who we saw mug for the camera.

OLIVIA (cont'd)
You're the best of the best.
Unfortunately we only have 16 slots so
most of you aren't going to make it
through the weekend.
(MORE)

OLIVIA (cont'd)

Half of you won't make it through the day. You're stiff. You're tired. Block it out. Today is your solos. Your chance to show us who you are. And as you can see, the competition just got tougher.

(then)

We also have an addition to the judges' table for the finals. Welcome former Devil and brand new Devils head coach Pete Davenport.

She steps aside for Coach Davenport. He's miserable.

COACH DAVENPORT

I don't know anything about dancing. Let's make a deal, I won't waste your time if you don't waste--

The gym doors swing open. Ahsha rushes in. She faces dozens of blank stares.

AHSHA

(mortified)

I am so sorry. My boyfriend's car broke down on the 405. Not really broke down, more like exploded. I left them there and took a cab all the way from--

COACH DAVENPORT

Who are you?

AHSHA

Ahsha. Ahsha Perry.

COACH DAVENPORT

Ahsha Ahsha Perry, if I have to be here at 6:30 a.m., so do you.

AHSHA

Of course. I totally understand professionalism, trust me. I was captain of my cheerleading squad in college, I know how important--

COACH DAVENPORT

First solo is yours.

AHSHA

First..?

(beat, it sinks in)

I need to change, warm up--

He's waiting. The silence is suffocating. She looks to the other women, all of whom both feel for her and are thrilled it's not them on the carpet.

She goes up. She takes a CD from her bag and hands it to a third judge, former Devil Girl GEORGIA (32), who pops it into the player. She hits play.

As the MUSIC STARTS, so does Ahsha. She's immediately overwhelmed. She can barely put two steps together, especially in jeans and bare feet. Her biggest nightmare, and she's dancing it. She steels herself just enough to salvage it and avoid total humiliation, but as Georgia stops the music, Ahsha knows she sucked. So does everyone else.

COACH DAVENPORT
(to Olivia and Georgia)
Can I tell her?

OLIVIA
(hesitating, to Coach
Davenport)
We're doing cuts at the end of the day.

COACH DAVENPORT
She was terrible.

OLIVIA
She's the daughter of an original Devil
Girl.

COACH DAVENPORT
Nepotism?

OLIVIA
Loyalty.

Ahsha can hear each and every word.

COACH DAVENPORT
Why am I even here?

AHSHA
Can I just...
(then)
I don't want to be judged on who my mom
is. Was. I want to be judged on me, what
I can do. And this...this wasn't it. I
just, my whole life I never dreamed of
being a dancer. I dreamed of being a
Devil Girl. To have the entire Devils
Stadium in my hand, on its feet. Being
here, it's all I ever wanted. Please, I
just...

She can't go on.

OLIVIA
 (to Coach Davenport)
 I think you made your point. And you
 didn't see her dance yesterday.

Coach Davenport looks at her sternly. There needs to be a compromise.

OLIVIA (cont'd)
 (turns back to Ahsha)
 Second chance. You're going to dance
 later. Blow it again and you're out.
 (reading her clipboard)
 Desiree, you're up.

As Desiree takes her place, Ahsha exhales. She dodged a serious, and very public, bullet.

INT. DEVILS STADIUM - LOCKER ROOM - MORNING

Ahsha washes her face after a good cry. A hand reaches out a box of tissues. Jelena's.

AHSHA
 (beat, wide-eyed)
 You're Jelena Howard. You're the captain
 of the Devil Girls. What am I talking
 about, you are the Devil Girls. I love
 you. But not in a lesbian way, but if you
 asked me to make out with you I totally
 would. That was a joke.
 (then, to herself)
 Oh my God, say something not
 embarrassing.
 (then)
 When I was leading my squad, I pretended
 I was you.

Oh, so close. Jelena smiles.

JELENA
 You think you can come in here with your
 college cheerleader shtick, your 'I have
 a dream' speech and your busted
 choreography and take one of our spots?
 (then)
 Your mommy may have scored you a second
 chance, but there's only so long before
 even you realize you don't have what it
 takes. Devil Girls don't need do overs.
 They don't need to beg. And they don't
 play pretend.

She drops the box of tissues on her lap and walks on. Ahsha's still frozen in the same position.

Nearby Raquel leans over. She can't resist anything in distress.

RAQUEL
Don't let Jelena get to you.

AHSHA
Her bark is worse than her bite?

RAQUEL
No, her bite is worse. She's just trying to push you.

AHSHA
To do my best or slit my wrists?

RAQUEL
Either way, win-win.

AHSHA
I'm shaking. I'm literally shaking.

Ahsha holds out her hand. She's not lying.

RAQUEL
Try doing this with a 4-year-old at home.

AHSHA
I love kids. I bet he's cute.

RAQUEL
He is cute. And expensive. With a deadbeat daddy.

AHSHA
I'll babysit him if you babysit me.
Jelena is one scary mother effer.

RAQUEL
(smiles)
Deal.

INT. DEVILS STADIUM - GYM - DAY

Kyle is in the middle of her solo. It's full of bumps, grinds and popping behinds. The only thing missing is a pole. When she's finished, even Coach Davenport has to drink a glass of water.

COACH DAVENPORT
Uh...thank you.

KYLE
 (smiles proudly)
 Anytime coach.

And she means it.

The GYM DOORS OPEN. In walks a few DEVILS, looking mighty fine in their uniforms. Especially ringleader DEREK FINN (25, African American). He's mischievous. And sexy as hell. They're all here to check out the merchandise.

DEREK
 Well hello ladies.

The girls perk up.

KYLE
 Which one of you boys wants to help stretch me out?

COACH DAVENPORT
 No one is stretching anyone out. My boys are not on the menu.
 (goes to the guys, low and stern)
 And vice versa. The door to your locker room is on the other side of the stadium.

DEREK
 This isn't a short cut?

COACH DAVENPORT
 To the bench. How'd you like to warm it till your ass has bedsores?

DEREK
 (leading the guys off, so his coach can hear)
 He don't let us have no fun.

The other guys laugh. Coach Davenport just shoots them a look.

Derek nearly runs into Ahsha on his way out. He likes what he sees. They both do. Time slows, but she shakes it off. She continues on. Derek watches after her. Damn.

EXT. DEVILS STADIUM - PARKING LOT - DAY

Raquel rummages through the action figures and pee wee soccer gear in her trunk, pulling out the change of clothes she was looking for. She slams the trunk shut, revealing JESSE READE (30s). His suit and tie can't cover up the bare knuckle brawler underneath.

RAQUEL

Jesus.

JESSE

Close. Looking good, Raquel.

RAQUEL

Thanks. I have to get back inside, they could call me--

He steps closer, blocking her way.

JESSE

Miguel had a smart mouth with my girlfriend last time I had him. I don't want to deal with that tomorrow. Whatever you told him about her, fix it.

RAQUEL

You'd be amazed at the hours and hours we spend not talking about you.

JESSE

Maybe that's the problem. He has no respect. No fear.

RAQUEL

He shouldn't fear you, he's four.

JESSE

You're screwing up, big time.

(then)

But I've got something that'll chill you out. A vacation.

RAQUEL

A..?

He slides his hand along her waste en route to an envelope in his pocket. He hands it to her. She opens it.

RAQUEL (cont'd)

(beat, confused)

This is from a lawyer.

(then)

You're suing me?

JESSE

This visitation BS ain't working for me. He needs a man in his life full-time.

RAQUEL

So find me one!

AHSHA (O.S.)
Raquel?

Ahsha appears. She doesn't know what she's walked in on.

AHSHA (cont'd)
I thought we could run through our solos together. Work out the kinks?

RAQUEL
Sure.

JESSE
I want him ready at 7am, not a minute later.

He smiles at Ahsha, then gets in his Lexus and drives off.

RAQUEL
(explaining)
Miguel's father.

AHSHA
What kind of deadbeat dad drives a Lexus?

RAQUEL
The kind that manages half the players on this team.

Shaken, Raquel heads inside. Ahsha just follows.

INT. DEVILS STADIUM - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Kyle puts on make-up. In the mirror, she catches Lexi and Desiree whispering behind her. Whispering about her.

KYLE
Which one of you has the crush?

Busted.

DESIREE
We heard rumors and we have to know. Are they true?

KYLE
What rumors?

LEXI
That you're a, uh...exotic dancer?

KYLE
(laughs)
Exotic dancer? Oh God no.
(MORE)

KYLE (cont'd)
 (then)
 I'm a stripper.

Kyle smiles, walks out. Oh yes she did.

INT. DEVILS STADIUM - GYM - DAY

In a corner, Ahsha works on her solo. Nearby, Jelena and Raquel look on. Raquel's wound up, tight.

JELENA
 What did you expect? He was a greaseball
 when you hooked up with him.

RAQUEL
 I was in love.

JELENA
 You're always in love. Honestly Raquel,
 if you took two seconds to think about
 the consequences of your actions you
 wouldn't be in the sinkhole you're in
 now. And dragging your kid down with you.

OLIVIA
 (calling over)
 Raquel!

RAQUEL
 (to herself)
 Oh God not now.

She looks to Jelena for help. As far as Jelena's concerned,
 she's given it.

A beat, then Raquel makes her way over.

Her MUSIC begins. She dances as best she can. But she's
 clearly on edge. She pushes through it, experience helping
 her out but not quite saving the day. She smiles, but all she
 can feel is complete dread.

CUT TO:

A MONTAGE of more solos, including Marissa and Lexi. Finally,
 Jelena takes center stage. She hasn't even started and
 everyone stops what they're doing. She needs no introduction,
 especially since she's friends with most of the judges.

OLIVIA
 Whenever you're ready Jelena.

She starts. As Ahsha, Raquel, et al look on, Jelena kills it. There's a reason she's not only a star, she's THE star. She finishes. With that, solos are done. Almost.

OLIVIA (cont'd)
(calling out)
Ahsha Perry.

AHSHA
(to Raquel)
I'm supposed to follow that?!

Raquel pushes her to the front. Ahsha passes Jelena.

JELENA
Break a leg.

Shit.

Her heart in her throat, Ahsha's MUSIC STARTS. No choice, she dives into her solo. She's not as good a cheerleader as Jelena. No one is. But she obviously has something in her genes because she's a better dancer. The beauty in her technique is just full emotion. Something Jelena doesn't fail to notice. It ends in silence.

Ahsha steps off, to Raquel.

RAQUEL
(genuinely)
Good job.

AHSHA
Good enough?

Everyone else is wondering the same thing.

BY THE JUDGES' TABLE

Olivia has a last powwow with the other judges. Finally--

OLIVIA
Ladies. You're going to be split into groups of six for tomorrow. If you're not in a group, good fight and good night.

Olivia places her lists on the table. The girls RUSH IT.

A slew of hopefuls are crushed.

Raquel finds her name, along with Marissa and Kyle. So does Ahsha.

AHSHA

Yes!

(to Raquel)

We're in the same group.

JELENA

(over their shoulder)

So we are.

Ahsha's smile disappears.

JELENA (cont'd)

It's your lucky day. You really want to know what it's like to be a Devil Girl?

I'm going to show you. Make sure your mommy signs your permission slip.

(then)

Game on.

She walks on. Ahsha goes cold.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. DEVILS STADIUM - GYM - DAY

The girls are in their groups of six. Jelena leads hers, working out choreography for Raquel, Ahsha and the rest.

JELENA

(to the newbies)

We have 45 seconds. Doesn't seem like a long time but it's an eternity if you're crapping yourself. Every year one group craps itself. That will not be this group, even if that means I run you all into the ground. Got it?

Got it.

RAQUEL

What if we did the Latin routine we did two years ago, but maybe mix it up with some Broadway?

JELENA

Don't you remember what happened to that group that did Broadway last year? It was like watching a Saw death set to "All That Jazz."

AHSHA

(summoning the nerve to speak up)

We did a routine during Homecoming, it was a throwback to old school cheerleading but we did it to NWA--

JELENA

(quickly)

Stick it in the suggestion box.

RAQUEL

I don't know. NWA is cool...

AHSHA

(encouraged)

It started like this--

Ahsha begins the routine.

JELENA

(stopping her)

If we want to learn how to convulse we'll find a choreographer with epilepsy.

(then)

(MORE)

JELENA (cont'd)

You three look tight, you're not getting any extension. A lap around the stadium will get you right.

She means Ahsha and the other two girls not in Devils colors. This is bullshit. Finally, no choice, they head off. Raquel feels worse and worse for her.

IN ANOTHER CORNER

Lexi, Marissa and Kyle are getting along slightly better in their group.

LEXI

Marissa and Kyle, you start out in the back, but then you go back-to-back and slide to the front. You've got to use each other for balance or you'll both fall on your asses.

KYLE

Can't we go front-to-front? It's hotter.

LEXI

I don't know what you do in the champagne room, but this is Devils Stadium. We're not trying to make tips here, we're trying to make art.

KYLE

Stripping can be art.

The other girls react. She's a stripper?

LEXI

Yeah, I'm sure Andy Warhol did his best work on some dude's lap.

KYLE

I'm pretty sure he did actually.

(then)

I'm just trying to spice this thing up, and so far the only thing I'm bringing to this routine is a book. This needs to be killer, I'm done stripping for car salesman in Carson.

MARISSA

Good for you.

KYLE

If I'm going to get out, I need to dance for higher class guys. And the front row here is as A-list as it gets.

LEXI

(beat)

You're a whore. You're just here to screw rich guys.

KYLE

I'm here to dance for rich guys.

LEXI

So the herpes is extra?

Kyle shoves her. Lexi shoves her back. In seconds they have clumps of each other's hair in their fists.

MARISSA

Guys!

Marissa and the others struggle to pry them apart.

EXT. DEVILS STADIUM - PARKING LOT - DAY

Ahsha runs, the two other newbies in the distance. She rounds a corner, then hits a wall. A 6'7" broad shouldered wall that knocks her to the ground.

Derek.

AHSHA

Oh my God.

DEREK

Are you okay?

She's legitimately dazed. He helps her to her feet, using his body to slide her up. They're close.

DEREK (cont'd)

You got all these curves but no brakes.

AHSHA

Wow. Really?

(stepping back)

Someone needs brakes, and it isn't me.

DEREK

I can't help myself, when I see an open chance to score I attack it. Did anyone ever tell you you look like Beyonce?

AHSHA

No one sighted. I hope for your sake your game is better on the court.

She runs on. He smiles, runs with her.

DEREK

Okay okay, that was B game. Let me give you my A.

AHSHA

I don't have time for your alphabet, I have to finish out here so I can go inside and work on my routine.

DEREK

Can I watch?

AHSHA

You a fan of dance?

DEREK

I'm a fan of a whole bunch of things.

AHSHA

You don't stop.

He does, right in front of her.

DEREK

You know, most girls like basketball players.

AHSHA

I love them. Got one of my own in fact.

DEREK

You got a boyfriend?

AHSHA

Yup.

DEREK

Who does he play for?

AHSHA

Didn't I hear your coach say something about no messing around between Devils and Devil Girls?

DEREK

Are you sure? The music was so loud he could've been saying anything.

She eyes him.

DEREK (cont'd)

(smiles)

Technically you're not a Devil Girl.

AHSHA

I don't think my boyfriend cares about
your technicalities.

She's unyielding.

DEREK

Cold shower for me then.

He takes off his shirt, unveiling obscene abs. A little show
for her as he heads inside, and God damn it if it didn't
work. The dude is an Adonis.

INT. DEVILS STADIUM - GYM - DAY

Jelena runs through the routine with her group.

JELENA

1 and 2 and come to the front, lift,
lift, NO! Ahsha, again.

(then)

1 and 2 and come to the front, lift,
lift, damn it! Ahsha, again!

Ahsha has no strength left in her legs. Or her will.

JELENA (cont'd)

Ahsha, since you can't hold the lift, we
have to get rid of it. We're tossing you
instead, you'll have to twist into the
open spot.

RAQUEL

She'll break her neck.

JELENA

There's a hole now, it's her fault, she
needs to fill it.

AHSHA

I can do it.

RAQUEL

You'll kill yourself.

AHSHA

Let me try.

JELENA

It's settled.

Ahsha starts to climb Desiree.

RAQUEL
 (pulling Ahsha down)
 It's not settled.

JELENA
 Raquel, don't you have a kid of your own
 to worry about?

RAQUEL
 (beat, almost inaudible)
 Unbelievable.

JELENA
 Excuse me?

Everything that's been building up inside Raquel comes to a
 boil.

RAQUEL
 I am so tired of seeing you terrorize
 people Jelena. You think you can just
 push people around. You're a bully,
 you've always been a bully and I'm sick
 of it!

A hush falls.

Jelena eyes her. No one has ever stepped up to her, and for
 it to be her closest friend on the squad? She'd never show
 it, or admit it to herself, but somewhere deep deep down,
 Jelena's hurt.

Jelena's not one to get into a public spat. But it's clear.
 Raquel's made an enemy for life. And, as Jelena eyes her, so
 has Ahsha.

RAQUEL (cont'd)
 (beat, the reality sinking in)
 Jelena, listen, I'm sorry. I think I'm
 just letting this Jesse thing get to me--

The GYM DOORS OPEN. In walks God, AKA TERRENCE WALL (26,
 African American). The Kobe of the Devils, Terrence makes his
 way through with his entourage, Derek included, igniting
 ridiculous fanfare.

MARISSA
 (awed)
 Oh my God.

AHSHA
 I didn't know Terrence Wall was going to
 be here.

Jelena meets up with him and they share a huge kiss. The other girls can't help but notice - was it for their benefit perhaps?

AHSHA (cont'd)
How can she get away with sleeping with a player when no one else can?

RAQUEL
(still shaken)
Different rules for different folk.

Ahsha and Derek lock eyes. He smiles. She turns away, but the chills are still there.

AHSHA
You risked a lot standing up for me.

RAQUEL
Nah, it'll be fine.

So why does Raquel look like a dead woman walking?

BY THE JUDGES' TABLE

One of the guys who came in with Terrence, Devils owner OSCAR KINKADE (50, larger than life). He swings by to check on Coach Davenport.

OSCAR
(full-on shit-eating grin)
Pete, lighten up for Christ's sake. Look at all the ass I set you up with today.

COACH DAVENPORT
Is this why you made me do this?

OSCAR
My way of rolling out the red carpet. Though some of these girls are more hardwood if you know what I mean.
(then)
I mean they wax their--

COACH DAVENPORT
I got it.
(then)
Listen, thanks but no thanks. Cut me loose, please.

OSCAR
Too late to yank you now, you've judged half the try-outs. There are rules and regulations that need to be followed.
(MORE)

OSCAR (cont'd)
 (on one of the girls)
 Oof. Georgia honey, pull that one. She
 looks like Mickey Rourke.

A beat, as Georgia awkwardly goes to the girl and ushers her
 out in confusion and tears.

OSCAR (cont'd)
 (on a passing Kyle, who saw the
 whole thing)
 I like that one.

COACH DAVENPORT
 I wonder why.

OSCAR
 Pete. She's not coming back to you. Go
 for the rebound already.

It may be Oscar's style to manhandle the goods, but it's not
 Pete's. Oscar winks at Kyle, then walks on. Pete's left to
 consider his words.

Olivia marches in.

OLIVIA
 Looking for Group A. Group A.

Ahsha looks to Raquel.

AHSHA
 That's us.

Raquel breathes deep, joining Jelena and the other girls up
 front. The MUSIC STARTS. Whatever friction they had, they not
 only start strong, they're killing it. In the end, they pull
 off a great routine. Ahsha surprises everyone, including
 Jelena, by pulling off the move she wanted her to do.

RAQUEL
 (to Jelena and Ahsha)
 We did it.

Ahsha hugs her, while Jelena steps off.

MONTAGE of the other groups going up. Finally--

OLIVIA
 Group E.

Marissa and Kyle head up with the rest of their group. The
 music STARTS. And they're immediately off. Marissa struggles,
 dragging down Kyle and Lexi with her.

AHSHA

Oh my God. They're the group that craps
itself.

The MUSIC STOPS. No one in the group can speak.

Raquel, Marissa, Ahsha, they're all staring at the judges as
they finalize their decision. There's little debate.

Olivia stands.

OLIVIA

When I call your name, step forward.
Monica, Billie, Jordan, Jordan #2,
Marissa...

Marissa perks up. She steps forward.

OLIVIA (cont'd)

Alison, Lakeisha, Kyle...

Kyle smiles, steps forward. Raquel and Ahsha look on as
Olivia continues reading off names. Finally--

OLIVIA (cont'd)

(to those singled out)
Thanks for coming. Everyone else, rest
up. Tomorrow's the big day.

Kyle's nonplussed. Marissa's just stunned. Ahsha feels bad
for them, but she can't help the smile that springs across
her face.

As the girls disperse in various states of disarray, Raquel
lingers.

RAQUEL

(unsettled)
We lost a couple of our own in that cut.

JELENA

Scared?

RAQUEL

Yeah.

Raquel looks to her for commiseration.

JELENA

(smiles)
You should be.

Jelena walks off. Raquel hangs behind, undone.

INT. TERRENCE WALL'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The CRESCENDO to crazy sex, the kind only two athletes can have. Jelena lays beside Terrence, both spent. The look on his face says it all. Whatever Jelena did to him, no one else has. Or can. And she sure as hell knows it.

TERRENCE
(when he's finally able to
speak)
Let's go to Maui.

JELENA
When?

TERRENCE
Now. Just hop on my jet and go. We can be
smelling like cocoa butter and everything
your mother warned you about in 6 hours.

JELENA
We still have one more day of try-outs.

TERRENCE
Like you're not making the team.

JELENA
It's not about making the team, it's
about making the team I want. Mia screwed
us over by taking off.

TERRENCE
Olivia has plenty of girls to pick from.

JELENA
Exactly. A lot of dead weight. I need to
make sure that dead weight gets cut.

TERRENCE
You are one hard ass bitch.

She grabs him by the back of his hair. He grabs her by hers. They smile, sink into the sheets for round two.

INT. RAQUEL'S APARTMENT - MIGUEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Raquel's in bed with her son MIGUEL (4). She's reading him a bedtime story.

RAQUEL

(reading)

"...and for all I know he is sitting there still, under his favorite cork tree, smelling the flowers just quietly. He is very happy." The end.

She puts the book down. Then picks up another.

MIGUEL

I'm tired.

RAQUEL

Don't you want to hear one more?

He makes a face. Clearly she's the one who can't sleep.

RAQUEL (cont'd)

I should pack your bag for tomorrow anyway. Your dad's picking you up bright and early.

She gets up and pulls out his overnight bag.

MIGUEL

Are you okay mommy?

RAQUEL

Of course I'm okay. Why wouldn't I be okay?

Even he can tell she's lying.

RAQUEL (cont'd)

Mommy just...made a mistake today at work. That's all.

MIGUEL

Did anyone get hurt?

If so, she's looking at him.

RAQUEL

I hope not.

MIGUEL

Did you want to sleep in here tonight?

Raquel smiles.

RAQUEL

You snore.

MIGUEL
You snore!

RAQUEL
Mentiroso!

She gets in bed and wrestles him. Until she hugs him, mostly to hide the fear on her face.

INT. DEVILS STADIUM - FRONT OFFICES - NIGHT

High heels slink along the hallway carpet. Up ahead, a door to an office is ajar, light on. Somebody's working late.

INT. OSCAR KINKADE'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Oscar's at his desk wrapping up business on the phone.

OSCAR
Don't know why she took off like that.
Don't care. That girl has a big mouth,
with what she knows let's hope we never
hear from her again--

In the doorway, Kyle appears. She's wearing an XL Devils jersey. And nothing else.

OSCAR (cont'd)
Something I can do for you?

KYLE
Actually? Yes. But first, there's
something I can do for you.

She smiles.

OSCAR
(into the phone)
I'll call you back.

She kneels down in front of him. As he grips the phone with one hand and white-knuckles his desk with the other...

INT. AHSHA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE-UP on the TV, and a FOLLOW-UP PIECE on the try-outs.

REPORTER
And after all that, we're down to 25.
Who's tough enough to hold on for one
more day?

An exhausted Ahsha clicks it off from German's lap.

SLOANE

It only gets harder.

AHSHA

Cheer for me. I'm down by 30 at the half.

(then)

I don't know who was worse, the douchebag Devils coach who chewed me out the second I walked through the door or Jelena, the Kraken with pom poms squad captain who has it out for me why I have no idea.

GERMAN

Which one had you running laps around the entire stadium?

AHSHA

Kraken with pom poms.

SLOANE

Why is a coach at try-outs?

AHSHA

They made him a judge, part of some PR blitz. "Former Devil Davenport Returns to L.A., Praise Jesus!"

SLOANE

Pete Davenport?

AHSHA

You know him?

She does.

GERMAN

Were any of the players there?

AHSHA

(beat, cagey)

They were around.

(then)

German, come with me tomorrow. I need you there.

GERMAN

Tomorrow's Picture Day. All hands on deck. I should get going actually.

He lifts her off him. She walks him to the door.

GERMAN (cont'd)
You're amazing Ahsha. When I got scouted
I cracked. The way you're handling the
pressure...

AHSHA
I love you.

They kiss, then he heads down the walk. She turns to go
inside.

GERMAN
Ahsha.

She turns back.

GERMAN (cont'd)
Is it really as awesome in Devils Stadium
as you'd imagine?

She studies his eyes. So much longing.

AHSHA
Nah.

They both know she's lying. He smiles sadly, then heads off.

Ahsha shuts the door, slumps back in the recliner.

SLOANE
Ahsha, I remember girls like Jelena. If
she's targeting you, it's because she
sees you as a threat.

Ahsha wishes she could believe that.

AHSHA
Will you come with me tomorrow?

SLOANE
I can't. I said I'd never go back years
ago and I meant it.

Ahsha nods. But by the look on Sloane's face, we're left to
wonder - is that the real reason?

INT. TERRENCE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Terrence is asleep when Jelena's cell vibrates. She looks at
the caller ID. She slinks out from under the covers and takes
her cell into the master bath.

INT. MASTER BATH - CONTINUOUS

She closes the door. We see who's calling. "Mia".

JELENA

(answering)

What did I tell you about calling me?

(then)

I don't care, Mia. I'm not your shrink,
I'm not your mother. The point of you
getting gone was staying gone. Unless you
want the alternative?

(beat, then)

I didn't think so. I'm doing you a favor.
Call me again and I stop being so nice.

She hangs up. She fixes her hair in the mirror, then it's
back to bed.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. DEVIL'S STADIUM - MAIN COURT - MORNING

The girls arrive in various states of disarray. All of them are awed by stepping foot on the court.

AHSHA

Is this where we're trying out today..?

OLIVIA

We need to see you all on the Big Stage.
You need to see yourself here.

Ahsha steps out onto the court. She breathes deep, both humbled and terrified by how close she is to her dream.

DEREK

Coming through.

Derek brushes past Ahsha on his way onto the far end of the court. It sends chills up her spine. Which unnerves the hell out of her. He's joined by more Devils.

AHSHA

(to Georgia)

They're going to be here while we dance?

GEORGIA

(setting up)

Devil Girls perform in front of millions of people. If you can't handle a few players, maybe this isn't the place for you.

AHSHA

No, I was just...

Raquel arrives. And she's not alone. She's got Miguel in tow.

MIGUEL

Pretty girls!

Jelena looks over. What the hell is he doing here?

RAQUEL

Jesse never came to pick him up this morning. Said he got "stuck in Vegas." I had no choice but to bring him here.

(then)

He knows what a distraction Miguel will be, he did this to mess me up.

JELENA

Wow, I'm sorry.

Raquel exhales. It took something like this to get her friend back.

JELENA (cont'd)

As if you needed to look more fried
around all these fresh-faced girls.

Jelena smiles, walks on. Past Kyle, who Coach Davenport and Olivia spot warming up.

COACH DAVENPORT

(calling over)

Young lady.

No response. He snaps his fingers.

COACH DAVENPORT (cont'd)

Young lady. Boy's name.

Kyle looks up.

KYLE

(smiles)

Kyle.

COACH DAVENPORT

Kyle. You know you were cut yesterday,
right?

KYLE

Yeah.

COACH DAVENPORT

You know what cut means, don't you?

KYLE

Yeah. You changed your mind.

COACH DAVENPORT

I didn't change my mind. Olivia didn't
change her mind.

Olivia's cell RINGS.

COACH DAVENPORT (cont'd)

Not trying to be a jerk here, we've just
got work to do.

OLIVIA
 (phone in hand)
 It's Oscar Kinkade. He wants us to...give
 Kyle Massey another chance.

Confused, Coach Davenport takes the phone.

COACH DAVENPORT
 It's Pete, what are--?
 (beat, then)
 You can't be serious. Oscar, come--

Oscar hangs up. Olivia and Coach Davenport look at each other, then turn to Kyle. She just grins.

ON THE COURT

Olivia circles them up.

OLIVIA
 Today we're doing a group number. An
 actual Devil Girls routine from last
 season. You need to pick it up fast.

MONTAGE

Olivia works them through the routine. Ahsha's all nerves, trying to focus on the steps and not on Derek looking on in the distance. Little Miguel tries to join in, but Raquel ushers him away.

OLIVIA (cont'd)
 More energy, harder hitting.
 (calling them over)
 Jelena, Raquel, Desiree, you've done this
 one a dozen times...

The women step out of the group then perform a sequence flawlessly. Or almost, as Raquel again has to push Miguel away.

OLIVIA (cont'd)
 You have to be able to pick this up and
 do it in your sleep, like--

She snaps her fingers over and over.

OLIVIA (cont'd)
 Again. Again. Again. This is what it
 takes to be a Devil Girl. Show me you
 hear what I'm saying.

We continue on, with Ahsha avoiding Jelena's eyes and Derek's everything.

Lexi's beside Kyle.

LEXI

What are you even doing here? I thought they kicked your ass out?

KYLE

I came back to give you this.

Kyle tosses Lexi a hair extension, a trophy from their brawl. Ahsha laughs. Lexi shoots Ahsha a look, stifling her. But Ahsha and Kyle still manage to share a smile. A moment of solidarity between privates in the middle of war.

THE STANDS - LATER

Ahsha towels off. Kyle's nearby chugging water.

AHSHA

I'm going to go as you for Halloween. That was awesome.

KYLE

You've got to be tough or these girls will eat you alive. You know, the ones that eat at all.

AHSHA

I don't get it, we're all in this together. That's the point right, unity? Team spirit?

KYLE

Oh my God it's like a unicorn humped a Care Bear and gave birth to you. Please don't make me worry about you, I can't stand all that gushy stuff.

AHSHA

Why would you worry about me?

KYLE

You have the talent to be the next Jelena.

AHSHA

How is that a bad thing?

KYLE

That makes you a target. You have no idea what she'll do to make sure you're not as good as her.

AHSHA
How do you know?

KYLE
I may not be the best dancer here, but I
know how the world works.

Kyle takes one more swig, then pours the rest over her head.
She looks good wet. And she knows it.

KYLE (cont'd)
Watch yourself, Care Bear.

As she starts to head back, she turns to Ahsha. Is she
coming? A beat, then Ahsha smiles. They head back together.

HALF COURT

The girls are gathered.

OLIVIA
Showtime girls. Looks like you've drawn
yourselves a crowd.

They have. The rest of the Devils have shown up, with
Terrence and Derek front and center. Little Miguel looks on.
Even Oscar Kinkade came down to check out the finals.

OLIVIA (cont'd)
Start the music.

Georgia presses play.

OLIVIA (cont'd)
Last bit of advice. Dance like your
future depends on it.
(then)
5, 6, 7, 8--

They start. Whatever differences some of them have, they're
dancing this together. Even Kyle is keeping up.

OLIVIA (cont'd)
Lexi! Kyle!

She motions them out of the group - to face off. They do,
with each looking to stamp out the other. They're hitting
harder, going bigger.

OLIVIA (cont'd)
Raquel! Jelena!

They replace Lexi and Kyle. They dance hard, Jelena not shying away from the spotlight, Raquel doing her best to hold her own. She can't afford to fade now.

OLIVIA (cont'd)
Ahsha! Desiree!

Ahsha and Desiree step out. Desiree's dancing her ass off. Ahsha's doing fine, but the moment still feels too big. You can see it on her face.

And then Ahsha sees her sneaking in the door. Sloane. Her mother came, to be here for her. To have her back. And she's not alone. German's with her. It fuels Ahsha, who picks up the pace and turns it out, leaving Desiree in the dust.

The routine ENDS. To serious APPLAUSE. Even they have to clap. So does Coach Davenport.

OLIVIA (cont'd)
That was fantastic! Great job ladies.
(beat, then)
Unfortunately, you can't all be Devil Girls. The judges are going to get together and hash it out. When we come back, we're going to have our team.

Olivia goes to confer with Coach Davenport and Georgia.

AT THE DOOR

Ahsha runs over to her mother and German and throws her arms around them.

AHSHA
(to German)
I thought you had to work?

German shrugs. She looks to her mother.

SLOANE
I had to see my baby dance.

It means everything to Ahsha.

There's so much going on for Sloane. More than Ahsha could possibly understand.

AHSHA
I want to introduce you guys to someone.

SLOANE
Go ahead. I'll be right there.

Ahsha leads German over to Raquel. Along the way, German grabs a basketball and shoots from the three-point line. Nothing but net. What he wouldn't give.

Alone, Sloane takes the place in. The stir of echoes...

OLIVIA (O.S.)

I was wondering if you'd show up.

Sloane turns to find Olivia.

OLIVIA (cont'd)

Wow Sloane, I haven't seen you in...years.

SLOANE

I see you all the time. On the TV.

OLIVIA

Could've been you on the TV too.

SLOANE

There's only ever room for one at the top. You had what it took. I didn't. But I did okay.

Olivia smiles. There's mutual respect, judgment and jealousy all rolled into one for both women.

OLIVIA

You did. You have a great daughter. I have to say, I'm surprised you wanted her to do this. All things considered.

SLOANE

This is all her. At this point, the only one who could stop this is you.

(beat, then)

Excuse me.

Sloane heads back to Ahsha. Olivia's watching after her when Jelena appears beside her, nonchalant.

JELENA

Raquel and Ahsha. No.

OLIVIA

(looks at her)

Raquel's your friend. She's going through some custody thing with Jesse. And Ahsha, Ahsha was bred for this, they're two of the strongest girls here.

JELENA

This team is about chemistry.

OLIVIA

This team is about fantasy. Raquel knows how to deliver it. And Ahsha is a fantasy. She's sexy without being threatening to women. She's got a great personality. She's the whole package.

JELENA

I want what's best for the team.

OLIVIA

Best for the team or best for you?

JELENA

Some might say that's one and the same.

OLIVIA

Some might.

Stalemate.

OLIVIA (cont'd)

(beat, finally)

And if I can only get rid of one?

Jelena considers. She leans in and tells her. What she tells her we don't hear.

Olivia looks over at Ahsha and Raquel trying to put Miguel's shoe back on. Olivia nods at Jelena and heads back.

Jelena looks back at Ahsha and Raquel, each trying to lift the other's spirits. One of these two is going home.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. DEVILS STADIUM - MAIN COURT - DAY

The girls are lined up. And beside themselves. Ahsha, Raquel, Kyle... Everything is resting on this for each and every one of them.

Olivia steps from behind the judge's table, clipboard in hand.

OLIVIA

Ladies, you worked your asses off.
Whatever happens, just know you impressed
the hell out of all of us.

What more can she say? She takes them in groups of five. Kyle and Lexi are the first group.

OLIVIA (cont'd)

(reading from her clipboard)
Arelly, Kyle, step back.

They do.

OLIVIA (cont'd)

(then, to the girls in front)
Hopefully I'll see you at try-outs next
year.

LEXI

What? Are you serious?

Olivia's not hearing any backtalk. Kyle beams and gives Lexi a wink as she's shown the door.

Olivia takes the next group of five.

OLIVIA

Jelena, Desiree, step back.
(then, to the girls in front)
I'm sorry.

Ahsha studies all the girls packing up their things and leaving, their dreams crushed. She's lost in it.

OLIVIA (cont'd)

(snapping her out of it)
Ahsha.

There are only two girls left. Raquel's one, Ahsha the other.

OLIVIA (cont'd)

Ahsha, step forward.

Ahsha's tearing up before Olivia's even said a word. German's praying, Sloane's heart is pounding.

Raquel looks at Jelena and sees the smile on her face. It hits her all at once. This was a set up. But which one of them is the target?

OLIVIA (cont'd)
(to Ahsha)
Don't be late tomorrow.

GERMAN
YEAH!!

Ahsha breaks down in tears. Raquel is just stunned. Along with everyone else.

Sloane can't believe it. As she and Olivia lock eyes, it's a hundred different emotions at once.

OLIVIA
I'm sorry Raquel.

And she means it.

AHSHA
I'm sorry, too.

RAQUEL
Don't be. I'm still getting my
babysitting.

Ahsha laughs through the tears. Raquel gets some hugs from the others and goes to get her things.

We're left with our squad.

OLIVIA
You've got 5 minutes.

They're each tossed a brown paper bag. They open them. DEVIL GIRLS UNIFORMS.

OLIVIA (cont'd)
What are you waiting for?

Huge smiles as they all scatter to change, leaving Jelena behind. She doesn't look particularly victorious.

JELENA
You asked me to make a choice. That
wasn't the choice I made.

OLIVIA
I thought you'd be happy.
(beat, try again)
Ahsha was too good.

JELENA
So was Mia.

Jelena walks on. Olivia realizes Jelena might not have been so innocent in that after all.

AHSHA
(approaching, empty-handed)
I didn't get one.

OLIVIA
(looking in a bag)
Here.

She hands it to her. Mia's uniform. Ahsha starts off.

OLIVIA (cont'd)
Hey.

She turns back.

OLIVIA (cont'd)
Be careful.

AHSHA
(thinking she means the
uniform)
I will!

Olivia just watches her go, hoping Ahsha's strong enough to run with the wolves. Ahsha heads straight to her mom.

AHSHA (cont'd)
Think you can help me into this?

Sloane takes the uniform. It even smells the same.

SLOANE
Once you put this on, it becomes real
hard to take it off.

Ahsha nods. She just wants it on her, immediately.

SLOANE (cont'd)
(finally, warily)
Let's see how it fits.

Ahsha snatches it and they head off.

Kyle shamelessly changes right there on the court. Oscar Kinkade passes by on his way out. She blows him a kiss. He catches it...and puts it down his pants.

AT THE JUDGE'S TABLE

Coach Davenport cracks open a beer. He deserves it God damn it. He sees someone making her way out. Raquel, holding Miguel's hand. He puts the beer down to intercept them.

COACH DAVENPORT

Raquel.

She stops. He hasn't said word one to anyone all day. This can't be good.

COACH DAVENPORT (cont'd)

Listen. I didn't fight for anyone.

(beat, then)

I fought for you.

RAQUEL

(beat, thrown)

Me? Why?

COACH DAVENPORT

Let's just say I'm extra sensitive to people doing their best to get by.

(beat, then)

Plus, I'm a fair guy. Whatever I think of all of this...you deserved better.

Despite everything, Raquel smiles. Which makes him smile. When he's not scowling, he's actually damn attractive. Is that a spark?

She takes a last look behind him, at the gym. Finally--

RAQUEL

Maybe I'll see you around.

With that, she takes Miguel and walks out.

INT. DEVILS STADIUM - MAIN COURT - DAY

All suited up, the Devil Girls run through the routine together. Their chemistry is amazing. Ahsha looks over, sees German and Derek standing right by each other. Each has a smile for her. Despite her best effort, each one lands with impact. Oh God. Be careful is right.

Looking on, Sloane sidles up beside Coach Davenport.

SLOANE

Who would've pictured you judging cheerleaders.

He turns. His jaw drops.

COACH DAVENPORT

Sloane. I can't believe-- What are you..?

SLOANE

I'm Ahsha's mother.

COACH DAVENPORT

Ahsha's mother, one of the original...

It all clicks.

COACH DAVENPORT (cont'd)

Jesus.

(then)

I haven't seen you in years, you look...great.

SLOANE

So do you.

(then, pointedly)

I don't have to remind you what goes on behind the scenes. And what can go on between Devil Girls and players. Now that Ahsha's on the squad, I'd feel a lot better knowing someone on the inside was looking out for her. She has no idea what she's gotten herself into.

COACH DAVENPORT

I mean, I can try but, really, these girls aren't my responsibility.

SLOANE

Wrong. Ahsha is your responsibility.

(beat)

She's your daughter.

Coach Davenport looks at her. She's unyielding. He looks back to the squad.

The Devil Girls' routine ends with Ahsha sticking the final landing.

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FIVE