

DUET REHEARSAL

A short play
at a dance rehearsal

By Rebecca Kane

Rebecca Kane
31-11 12th St.
Astoria, NY 11106
(561) 843-0969
kane.rebecca.b@gmail.com

CAST OF CHARACTERS (2W)

Katie: Teenage girl, any race

Ainsley: Teenage girl, any race

Setting:

A dance rehearsal studio.

Time:

After school, modern day.

CONTENT WARNING:

This play discusses non-consensual sexual touching.

SYNOPSIS:

Katie and Ainsley stretch in preparation for the duet rehearsal. They've got a competition coming up, and a school dance, and solos they don't even like much... when you're a teenager, everything seems so serious. When they start discussing some unusual teaching tactics of their choreographer, everything suddenly seems more serious than ever.

[Lights up on a rehearsal space, mostly empty, but we're seeing the last of KATIE and AINSLEY settle in. They have some Top 40 hits playing from one of their phones, they're putting down their dance bags, they're settling into some initial stretches. They both have on fairly revealing dance clothes (sports bras, booty shorts, the like), but Katie has an extra tee or sweatshirt on to cover herself up. She adjusts it a lot. As they stretch, Katie leans her feet over into Ainsley's space. Ainsley wiggles away, making some sort of noise. It's obviously a familiar joke.]

KATIE:

Hey. Hey Ainsley.

AINSLEY:

Yeah. Katie.

KATIE:

Do you like your solo?

[Ainsley readjusts in the stretch, turns away]

AINSLEY:

Oh for sure.

KATIE:

Liar.

AINSLEY:

No, I do!

KATIE:

You thought you were gonna get the Billie Eilish song when you heard Ms. Katerina playing it in the office.

AINSLEY:

I didn't not think I was gonna get the Ocean Eyes solo but I like my solo. Celine Dion's cool.

KATIE:

Ew.

AINSLEY:

That's rude! She's a star and stuff!

KATIE:

I like mine. I wish my costume was different.

AINSLEY:

Yeah.

KATIE:

Yours is so pretty though, with all the blue sequins and the—

AINSLEY:

No, I meant I wish yours was different too. [*When Katie leans over to fake-kick her, swearing all the way:*] I'm kidding I'm kidding I'm kidding! You can't leave me an opening like that dude. Actually, I think it's really cute. Wait, why don't you like it?

KATIE:

I guess I wish like, the stomach wasn't out? [*Off Ainsley's puzzled look*] Or like, not out like that. You know? Out in a different way. It doesn't have to be like all the way out in the side like that. Not my obliques. Oh god. I'm getting soft there. Fuckin puberty

AINSLEY:

No WAY dude you have abs for days, fool!

KATIE:

At least you have like, tits.

AINSLEY:

YOU HAVE TITS!

[*Katie adjusts her top as they stretch. An uncomfortable position.*]

KATIE:

Sorry, this like, it like, does not fit. Do you see the back strap—is it all tangled or—can you pull it out? [*Ainsley leans over and sticks a hand down her shirt, no hesitation. Katie twitches, Ainsley keeps pulling at it.*] Do you see what I mean?

AINSLEY:

Yeah hold on

KATIE:

Ugh you know - never mind

AINSLEY:

Hang on, almost got it

KATIE:

It's fine

AINSLEY:

Hang on—

KATIE:

Can you help me stretch? Like to get my side extension. Over here. Against the wall.

[*She gets up and goes over to the wall. Ainsley follows, helps her get her foot as high up as possible against the wall.*]

KATIE:

That's not how, like—Mr. Robbie has this weird way that kind of worked it but it—ugh, never mind. Let's do our splits, then let's go over that weird bridge part of the song that we hate before he gets here.

AINSLEY:

He's going to be late. Like always.

[*They do some a split stretch of some kind, involving pulling each other over at painful looking angles. A deep partner stretch.*]

AINSLEY:

Did you mean like the part where - the song goes like [*A poor rendition of their song, probably purposely worse than it is:*] "Hold me dooo---oooo---wwnnn...."

KATIE:

No she goes like "Hold me dooO0000wwnn"

[*They dissolve into even worse fake singing, more like some animal noises, eventually laughing, then getting self-conscious and stopping.*]

KATIE:

Yeah that part.

[*Ainsley gets up to find the song on her phone. She plays bits and pieces of the song, searching for it. Katie listens to it, thinking. Eventually, Ainsley comes back over, awkwardly counts them in, and they start a section of a dance. Even though it's an awkward start in the middle of a dance that needs more work, it's obvious the moves are very mature. Sexual, not in a funny or jazzy way. Katie seems to be more uncomfortable than Ainsley.*]

AINSLEY:

That's what's off. [*Stopping the music.*] The dip down to the floor - you're like hesitating -

KATIE:

Well yeah I mean it's -- yeah it's just weird that's why.

AINSLEY:

Nah, it's the same as the one when we did that Proud Mary jazz - what was it - two years ago or-

KATIE:

No, no, it's just that, Hey, Hey, Ainsley.

AINSLEY:

Yeah? Katie?

KATIE:

Like. What do you think this song is about?

AINSLEY:

I don't know.

KATIE:

Like... not at all?

AINSLEY:

I guess I didn't think about it. Because I was. Like. Busy thinking about the section with the straddle.

KATIE:

Like... .. but if you were to guess.

AINSLEY:

I guess it's about. I mean, she keeps saying "hold me down hold me down" so if I were to guess I'd say she's being. Held down.

KATIE:

DUH I mean like, but what does she actually mean? Do you think she means in a sexual way? Is it about that?

AINSLEY:

No, I think it's probably about LIFE holding her down. Like you know. The Man.

KATIE:

Actually can we go back to the wall so I can do that extension again? I feel mega stiff.

[They go over. Ainsley seems hesitant.]

KATIE:

Can you - if you actually push my foot up here -

AINSLEY:

What were you saying about how Mr. Robbie has a way he does it?

KATIE:

Oh. Yeah. It's like this... put your hand on my foot up here.
[Ainsley does.] And take your other hand and put it on my thigh
like right here. [Ainsley does.] And then push the foot up, and
turn your other hand more ... in.

[A pause. Ainsley realizes that Katie means
to move her hand more toward the interior of
her thigh. She hesitates. Then does what
Katie says.]

AINSLEY:

There? [Katie nods.] Mr. Robbie puts his hand there?

KATIE:

I mean only for a minute to make sure it's stable like now you
can let go I mean like now you can LET GO IT'S FINE

AINSLEY:

Oh sorry, sorry, sorry it just like it didn't seem stable yet
and like I didn't want to--

KATIE:

It's fine. I have it now.

AINSLEY:

Oh. Okay.

[A big shift in the air. Ainsley goes off to
do some other stretch.]

KATIE [singsongy]:

Hey heyyyy Ainsley

AINSLEY:

Yeahhhh Katie

KATIE:

I heard you have another kind of daaannnnnnce coming up

AINSLEY:

Ugh oh god

KATIE:

A big spring dance you get to go to with your boyyyyyfrriiend

AINSLEY:

Imagine Matty in a suit, YIKES!!

KATIE:

God I miss public school

AINSLEY:

Yeah RIGHT you get to be here all the time. I'm gonna ask my mom again this summer and I'm going to BEG her like on my hands and knees.

KATIE:

Speaking of being. On your knees. What are you going to wear?

AINSLEY:

EWWWUH KATIE GOD.

KATIE:

No really! What do you want to wear?

AINSLEY:

I don't think I'm gonna go.

KATIE:

What?? But you even have a boyfriend and everything. How can you not go to your high school fucking dance?

AINSLEY:

It's the same weekend as the Starpower thing, the New Bedford weekend.

KATIE:

Oh. Shit.

AINSLEY:

Yeah. Yeah oh shit.

KATIE:

If you can't do New Bedford -

AINSLEY:

Then, yeah, I can't do Finals in Philly. Yeah. Shit.

KATIE:

Damn. I'm so sorry.

AINSLEY:

It's whatever. I'd rather do Finals. I wonder where Mr. Robbie is. Why is he always so late?

KATIE:

The later he is the less we have to hear this lady whine about getting held down

AINSLEY:

The fewer straddle jumps we have to

KATIE:

Yeah. I mean. My *ankles* after last time, dude

AINSLEY:

Knowing him, he'll just want to focus on like. One body part. Probably our arms.

KATIE:

Yeah. I hope it's just. our arms. I could use that.

AINSLEY:

Yeah you could.

[A weird silence as they finish up final stretches. Katie faces away from her.]

AINSLEY:

Even if I could go to the dance, what would I even wear? My junior solo dress? As if. My mom would just bitch again about costs, classes, second mortgage, this and that, bla bla... *[noticing the silence]* Bla bla. Katie. I didn't mean that about your arms a second ago. You know that right? They've gotten so

much better. Not that they were ever bad, but now they're like, *amazing*, so—

KATIE:

No, sorry, it's not that, it's just, this strap again. It's really. Ugh.

[Ainsley comes right over to try to fix it again.]

AINSLEY:

I almost have it. What a weird — where did you even get this thing —

KATIE:

That Insta sponsorship thing.

AINSLEY:

God Dancewearultra sucks my dick. This thing is impossible. Maybe Mr. Robbie will know how to fix it.

[Ainsley wanders away, turns off her phone. When she does, she notices they're in total silence. Katie holds her twisted top.]

KATIE:

He tried to fix my top last time.

AINSLEY:

Yeah?

KATIE:

Yeah.

AINSLEY *[not really wanting to ask]*:

Like how?

[Katie shows her. It involves putting her hands on her breasts, an area not even close to the twisted part of the top. Ainsley watches, and for once, pauses, actually thinking through her words.]

AINSLEY:

Did you tell your mom?

KATIE:

I'm not going to tell my mom.

AINSLEY:

Did you tell Ms. Katerina?

KATIE:

She's going to tell my mom.

He's gonna chaperone the Philly Finals.

My mom wouldn't let me go.

AINSLEY:

I mean... it's just one finals. Right? Maybe I do want to go to my dance thing. In the spring. I mean, I DO, I do wanna go. So I wouldn't blame you if you didn't want to do this duet there. Like if you couldn't go.

KATIE:

No, we should go if you want to go. I want to go. Especially if you wanna go.

AINSLEY:

Yeah. For sure. Hey, you said you were stiff, and like, me too kinda, so... let's do that one down here one more time.

[She leads them back down to the floor to do that one where they take turns leaning forward into splits, deep ground stretches. They are really pulling on each other.]

AINSLEY:

You should really tell your mom though. It might not even be that bad. I mentioned once, that like, he used to like, you know, also fix my tops that way. Especially for that like. The junior solo dress, the sparkly one, right before I went on. And my mom said. I was probably not understanding it. Misinterpreting it or whatever. So maybe it'll just be fine.

KATIE:

Or maybe we are misinterpreting it.

AINSLEY:

Yeah maybe his hands just slipped. Or something.

KATIE:

Right, or something.

AINSLEY:

Damn I can't wait for Philly

KATIE:

Oh hell yeah!

AINSLEY:

But first we gotta slay at New Bedford.

KATIE:

We will.

[Their stretch is done. They hear noise from outside, voices, adults chatting.]

AINSLEY:

There he is.

KATIE:

Hey. Hey, Ainsley.

AINSLEY:

Yeah? Katie.

KATIE:

If he ever shows you how to do your extension against the wall, like how he showed me, can you promise to tell me?

AINSLEY:

I promise.

KATIE:

Even if it's at Finals.

AINSLEY:

I promise, yeah, Katie.

*[The door to the studio opens. The girls go
into first position.]*

READ ONLY