CELEBRATED

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INT. GOOD MORNING AMERICA DRESSING ROOM 1 - MORNING

SERENA BELL (40) sits in her seat getting last minute touch-ups for her make-up and hair. Her blonde hair tousles over her shoulders. She wears a black scuba dress.

Serena appears exhausted while texting on her phone. Without looking up, she reaches for her hair.

SERENA
Pedro, silly, I said hair up in a bun not over my shoulders.

She sticks her tongue out as a joke.

PEDRO
Sorry, Serena.

Her stylist, PEDRO (25), quickly goes from primping Serena’s lips into grabbing her hair and lassoing it into a bun.

INT. GOOD MORNING AMERICA DRESSING ROOM 2 - MORNING

DANA DEREKS (40), dressed in a black suit, is on the phone discussing her interview. At the same time the finishing touches of her look are being put on her face.

She looks at photos on her iPad of Serena that are racy and risque, borderline pornographic. Dana looks angry at herself.

DANA
But Frank, I have some questions that can explain her status as celebrity.

Dana looks at herself in the mirror quickly while listening to the other end of the line. She taps her STYLIST on the shoulder.

DANA (CONT’D)
(whispered)
Could I get my hair done up in a bun please?

The stylist nods and she mouths the words “Thank you” to him as he does so. She smiles politely.

INT. GOOD MORNING AMERICA DRESSING ROOM 1 - CONTINUOUS

Serena briefly puts her phone down and glimpses at herself in the mirror before frowning.
SERENA
Could I get something for my eyes please?

INT. GOOD MORNING AMERICA DRESSING ROOM 2 - CONTINUOUS
Dana switches the phone from one side of her face to the other side.

DANA
That's exactly the point. So I think that the focus should be on what she has done with her hiatus. Just trust me Frank, it will paint her in a much more realistic light.

INT. GOOD MORNING AMERICA DRESSING ROOM 1 - CONTINUOUS
A PRODUCTION ASSISTANT knocks on the door. Serena turns around expectantly.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Serena, they are ready for you.

Serena flashes a smile and arises, approaching the door, phone in hand.

SERENA
And I’m ready for them!

Serena enters the hall.

INT. GOOD MORNING AMERICA DRESSING ROOM 2 - CONTINUOUS
A second PRODUCTION ASSISTANT knocks on the door. Dana slides the phone down from her ear.

DANA
Yes?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT 2
Are you ready, Ms. Dereks?

DANA
Certainly.

Dana puts the phone back up to her ear.

DANA (CONT’D)
I have to go, but I think I’ll surprise you with this.
Dana hangs up the phone, gets up, and exits, pleased.

EXT. GOOD MORNING AMERICA PATHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dana walks behind Serena on the pathway that connects the dressing rooms to the outdoor stage for performance.

DANA
Serena?

Serena continues to walk forward while texting without turning around.

SERENA
Yes, I know. You’ll get the eyes just right next time. I look good enough for now, Pedro. Thanks.

Serena flails her arm out backwards, giving a thumbs up.

DANA
No. Actually I was going to say that I look forward to interviewing you.

Serena’s eyes widen as she stops in place and turns around. She composes herself instantly, smiles, and shakes Dana’s hand.

SERENA
That’s so funny. You have the same voice as my hairstylist.

A silence swells before a less than amused Dana gestures forward.

DANA
Shall we?

EXT. GOOD MORNING AMERICA SUMMER CONCERT SERIES - CONTINUOUS

Upon the stage’s LED screens flash advertisements of Serena Bell and her Greatest Hits Album “Coming Soon.”

The stage is flanked by hundreds of FANS who cheer. The EMCEE stands at the front of the stage, ushering the audience to clap loudly.
EMCEE
Now, the rest of America doesn’t know that Serena already gave you a glimpse of her set list in soundcheck... So be just as enthusiastic when she comes out as the first time! How excited are you?

The audience gives a loud, but not overwhelming response.

EMCEE (CONT’D)
Come on, people! I know she hasn’t released a new song for a while now but get pumped up!

The audience swells.

EMCEE (CONT’D)
That’s better! Now, in 3, 2-

He holds up his hand to gesture the camera to start rolling.

Serena enters on-stage and does a small twirl to get into place. She grabs a microphone and places it in hand.

SERENA
What’s up, New York?

Immediately afterwards, Dana comes out and stands in cue for the interview portion.

Serena sees Dana’s hair and decides to drop her own hair down.

DANA
I am Dana Dereks, filling in for the week here at GMA. Now, we are here with singer and entertainer Serena Bell. Now, I understand you wanted to drop by and give some news to your fans.

SERENA
That’s right. As you all know, I’ve been taking it pretty easy lately. But... my greatest hits album drops today and I’m also starting to record my fifth album today!

DANA
That actually prompts a question of mine. You have this return to music that you have promised fans... (MORE)
DANA (CONT'D)
Why did you wait five years before returning to make more?

SERENA
You know, I always had it in the back of my mind to travel the world and I never had the chance when I was younger. So, after my last album, I decided to do a kind of spaced out tour... It was a bit more low-key because it was over the course of a few years, but I got to do a few shows in each of the countries I visited and I wasn’t pressured to do anything or move on unless I wanted to.

Serena pauses before laughing a bit.

SERENA (CONT'D)
I guess it was kind of like a Vegas show now that I think about it.

Dana looks at Serena questionably.

DANA
Not that I am trying to steal your thunder here, but I’ve heard reliable sources say that you were increasingly hard to please... That’s what triggered this decision.

Serena is taken aback. She attempts to redo her posture to make up whatever ground she has just lost, but fails.

SERENA
I am a perfectionist in what I do, which may make it hard sometimes...

DANA
But now’s your chance to prove to the many nay-sayers that your perfectionism paid off, right?

Serena trembles.

SERENA
Definitely yes. I have four great routines to perform for you guys!

Serena turns to the audience to regain confidence. As they cheer, she finds her footing once again.
SERENA (CONT’D)
Are you all excited?

DANA
I know I am! But before you get started, your last concert was in Rome, right?

SERENA
Yes, that’s right.

DANA
You were accused of lip syncing, a hot topic in the music industry right now.

Serena doesn’t know how to respond.

DANA (CONT’D)
The reason I bring this up is because I know for a fact that with this GMA performance, you have no pre-recorded vocals.

Dana turns to the audience.

DANA (CONT’D)
Folks, she is singing LIVE!

Serena nods timidly.

DANA (CONT’D)
Here with “Flash,” it’s Serena Bell.

Dana steps back as Serena gets into place.

The band starts playing the music with an extended dance sequence at the beginning.

Serena’s DANCERS start to perform choreography as Serena performs armography.

Suddenly, smoke fills the stage and all that can be seen is Serena’s silhouette.

She turns around and walks forward. Smoke continues to pour out. Serena stops in place and performs her dance moves rather cautiously.

Her eyes widen as she realizes she cannot see her dancers because of the smoke.
Given the cue of the music, however, she goes into an intense dance break that is completely out of sync with her dancers.

The dancers straddle behind Serena, ready for her to dip into their arms for an overhead lift.

As Serena still cannot see around her, she maintains her dance break because it is receiving loud applause.

The dancers decide to move onto the next section of choreography.

The smoke dissipates somewhat as the dancers begin to move away. Serena sees that her dancers are behind her. Just as they jump away, Serena falls back onto the stage headfirst into the clearing smoke.

INT. SERENA BELL’S HOME - EVENING

Serena’s living room is full of white decoration and ornamentation. Musical awards line a shelf, all without a speck of dirt upon them. In front of this display, however, are Serena’s family pictures.

Serena is dressed in lounge-wear. Her sister, LAURA JUNE (30), who bears the family resemblance, sits next to her as they watch the end of the performance on Serena’s 90-inch television.

After the quick cut of the fall, Dana appears on screen.

    DANA
    Unfortunately, we have to cut to commercial break.

Serena fast forwards through the commercials.

    SERENA
    That was awful. The fog machines wouldn’t turn off.

    LAURA JUNE
    It wasn’t that bad. Mistakes happen.

    SERENA
    No, just watch. It gets worse.

Serena presses play.
DANA
It’s my understanding that Serena had to be rushed to the hospital following the incident minutes ago.

LAURA JUNE
I don’t get the big deal here...

SERENA
Here it comes.

DANA
The question on many people’s minds is whether or not Serena Bell is done.

Serena turns off the television and has tears forming in her eyes.

SERENA
I ruined any chance I had for this next album.

Serena rises from her seat and tries to smile confidently, wiping her tears away.

SERENA (CONT’D)
I know what Mom and Dad would say right now.

Serena looks at Laura June.

SERENA AND LAURA JUNE
You never should have become a singer in the first place.

Laura June gets up from the couch and gives her sister a warm embrace.

LAURA JUNE
Don’t count yourself out, sis. You have plenty of people doing that for you right now. What you need to do is show everyone that Serena Bell is still here.

Laura June points to a large portrait of an iconic Serena Bell performance. In it, Serena wears a black jumpsuit in the photo and is in the midst of doing aerial work.

LAURA JUNE (CONT’D)
Now’s your chance to show them you’re anything but done.
Serena sighs at the thought.

SERENA
And how do you suppose I do that?
That was my shot-

LAURA JUNE
I’m sure that a shopping day at
Jinette’s tomorrow will open up a
world of possibilities. I already
had Douglas book you an hour to
yourself.

Serena smiles and gives Laura June a hug.

SERENA
That’s exactly what I need.

INT. DANA DEREKS APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dana’s apartment is full of sleek, metallic decorations and
figurines with a mix of black-and-white leather furniture.

There are framed photos of different expeditions that Dana
has gone on with her signature imprinted at the bottom of
them. Meanwhile, she has three articles that are also framed
from different publications.

Dana sits alone, watching a video of herself at age 30 and
WILLIAM (25).

In the video, Dana sits next to William on the sofa, flashing
a diamond engagement ring to the camera.

She turns to William and gives him an elongated kiss.

The camera goes black before it resumes filming as both Dana
and William enter a bar.

William has his hands covering her eyes.

WILLIAM
And here we are.

William removes his hands and Dana opens her eyes to...

A standard operating bar.

DANA
What’s the point of filming a night
at the bar?

She turns back around to him.
Quietly and quickly, FRIENDS rush up behind her as balloons shoot up from out of nowhere and banners stream down.

Dana is tapped on the shoulder. She buries her head into William’s chest and shrieks as he starts laughing.

EVERYONE
Happy engagement!

The camera swirls back to an overjoyed Dana.

Dana turns off the television and reaches for a card on the table.

“Join us as we begin our life together.

—William and Katherine”

She drops the invitation and reads an article title and byline on her laptop: “Star’s Fall an Indicator of the Industry? Dana Dereks, Contributing Journalist”

She drafts an e-mail to the New York Times and attaches the article. “Mr. Baquet, This may serve function well as a culture piece. Sincerely, Dana Dereks”

She smiles at her work.

INT. JINETTE’S - MORNING

Jinette’s has exquisite and carefully constructed clothing throughout the store. Most of the colors are bright and vibrant.

Serena sits in the back of the boutique trying on pink pumps.

Serena wears a long black flare skirt and a black button-up. Her hair is disheveled in a ponytail and she wears sunglasses.

DOUGLAS MCMAHON (28), Serena’s manager, urgently walks to the back of the shop.

DOUGLAS
You know you’ve had your hour...
The store’s opening to other guests.

Serena looks up to Douglas after smiling at her shoe selection.

SERENA
Hi to you too, Douglas!
DOUGLAS
Look, Serena, as your long-time manager, you know I’m not going to sugarcoat things for you.

Douglas takes a seat next to Serena.

DOUGLAS (CONT’D)
We need to address what happened: Richard isn’t too happy about you announcing a new album. Your contract is under review until your greatest hits numbers are in. And, given yesterday’s fall I don’t know how things will turn out as that was the one promo piece we had booked.

Serena nonchalance continues to put on shoes, disregarding the negativity.

SERENA
Well can’t we just book another?

DOUGLAS
Don’t take this the wrong way, but greatest hits albums aren’t exactly in high demand.

SERENA
Well... Laura June helped me realize that this all wasn’t such a failure. There’s plenty I can do to recuperate.

Serena lifts her feet up and down, analyzing the different angles of the shoes.

SERENA (CONT’D)
Why don’t we slap on a hot new single to the greatest hits album as a sign of things to come and book some more promo?

She gets up and walks over to try on a pink cashmere cardigan over her outfit.

SERENA (CONT’D)
Not too flattering with this skirt underneath, is it?

Serena buttons the cardigan and twirls around.
SERENA (CONT’D)
I mean, we’ve been pulling material for a while now...

Douglas steps in front of Serena to get her attention.

DOUGLAS
And you’re sure yesterday’s performance mishap wasn’t brought on by any prodding in that interview?

Serena stares aghast at Douglas and goes in closely for a hushed conversation that is more loud than quiet.

SERENA
Douglas, she was WAY off base. You and I both know that we had a list of approved questions and then she went and did that-

DOUGLAS
I already made a call to FAME magazine to get the situation handled. I haven’t heard back yet.

SERENA
But no, Douglas, my fall had more to do with the smoke.

DOUGLAS
There wasn’t anymore smoke than in your dress rehearsal.

Serena chooses to ignore the comment and undoes her ponytail. She takes off her sunglasses and puts them down. She looks in a mirror, touches up her make-up, and lets her hair fall gently on her shoulders.

Serena turns to look at a bored Douglas.

SERENA
I’ve been thinking about the lead single. It really has got to be “Serenade.”

DOUGLAS
I don’t know, Serena... That song is from a complete unknown. It would be stronger for you to start off with “Influence.” Marquina has a history with you and people liked that sound.
SERENA
Douglas, that was five years ago. “Serenade” is fresh and forward-thinking. It’s like what “Travails” did for me, you know? If I get this one done, you all can choose the next single.

Douglas rubs his temples, but nods.

Serena walks away to try on necklaces at the front of the store as Douglas hurriedly follows.

A few TEENAGERS walking by outside of the store see that Serena is in the store and pull out their phones to record her and take pictures.

DOUGLAS (CONT’D)
I suppose we can do some focus groups...
(beat)
But you know what would get you back in the public eye after such a long break-

SERENA
Is?

DOUGLAS
Well, you’ve refused reality before-

A SHOPPER approaches Serena with an ecstatic expression.

Serena goes from dumbfounded at Douglas to ecstatic with the shopper.

SHOPPER
I can’t believe it!

SERENA
You’re too sweet.

SHOPPER
Those pumps finally arrived! I’m in a bit of a hurry so can you get me a pair in size 6, please?

Serena’s happiness crumbles as disgust arises on her face.

Douglas chuckles before getting a look from Serena.

SERENA
You’re not serious, are you?
The shopper is confused as Serena does her best to suppress irritation.

SHOPPER
Don’t you work here?

Serena points at herself with both fingers.

SERENA
What would make you think that I work here?

Douglas crosses his arms, bracing himself.

SERENA (CONT’D)
No really.

SHOPPER
Your outfit...

Serena looks down at herself. The combination of hair down, pink cardigan, and pink pumps makes her look like an employee.

Serena laughs it off and frowns.

SERENA
I’d understand where you’re coming from if you didn’t know who I am...

SHOPPER
I don’t.

Serena’s face is blank.

SERENA
I’m Serena Bell.

The shopper has no change in demeanor.

Serena has a few tears forming as she tries to walk past the shopper. She inadvertently pushes the shopper aside, causing the woman to fall to the ground.

Serena takes off the cardigan, crumples it up, and throws it to the ground. She tears off the pumps and quickly gathers her belongings.

Serena leaves the store.

Douglas follows behind Serena after he helps up the customer.
INT. SHOPPING MALL - CONTINUOUS

Serena sees the teenagers who filmed her exchange with the woman. They scurry away.

Douglas catches up with Serena. She has a frightened look on her face.

    DOUGLAS
    Serena-
    SERENA
    Shit.
    DOUGLAS
    What?
    SERENA
    I think those kids got that.

Serena puts on her sunglasses to mask the tears and walks away from him. She turns over her shoulder.

    SERENA (CONT’D)
    I’ll see you later at the recording studio.

Serena waves and walks away.

INT. FAME MAGAZINE RECEPTION - DAY

FAME’s office space is richly textured with CRIMSON RED CARPET and GRANITE WALLS.

Dana enters the building.

Dana is about to brush past SHELLY, the receptionist. However, Shelly sees Dana and grabs her attention.

    SHELLY
    Ms. Dereks, Frank wants to see you immediately.

Dana changes course for Frank’s office.

    DANA
    Thanks, Shelly.

INT. FRANK’S OFFICE - DAY

Prestigious awards for celebrity pieces hang upon the walls of the office in addition to the many framed pictures of the heads of multi-media conglomerates and FRANK BERGMAN (50).
Frank sits at a desk in a chair that looks as though it were a throne, wearing a classic and dressy SUIT.

A knock at the door.

    FRANK
    Come in.

Dana opens the door hesitantly and approaches Frank.

    DANA
    You wanted to see me?

    FRANK
    Don’t act surprised, Dereks. Take a seat.

Dana sinks into her chair.

    FRANK (CONT’D)
    You were let go from LIFE because you always went for the best images on your terms without consultation. And what did you do just now?

    DANA
    Not that...

    FRANK
    I watched that interview start to finish. How can you say you didn’t? Was it juicy? Sure. Hell, the thing’s already gone viral. This would be our story of the year had you not come across as... vindictive-

    DANA
    Frank, there’s no way-

    FRANK
    Have you seen the playback? Have you read the comments that have been posted?

Dana sits in astonished silence.

Frank loses his composure and slams his fist on the table.

    FRANK (CONT’D)
    That whole bit about her being difficult and then the lip synch... God damn it, Dana! You need to know how you come across.

    (MORE)
FRANK (CONT’D)
You were blacklisted from the journalism circuit for a reason...

DANA
Frank, let’s face it. If anything, this put Serena Bell back on the radar-

FRANK
It was at the expense of her reputation. When a FAME journalist comes across as unprofessional it undermines MY reputation.

Dana erupts from her seat and stands over Frank’s desk.

DANA
That’s not true! I informed the audience she would be singing live!

Dana sits back down, composing herself.

DANA (CONT’D) (CONT’D)
Besides, I was hired by GMA to be a temporary host. It has nothing to do with FAME.

FRANK
Dereks, it was a joint venture. With all the pressure for media convergence, this was our opportunity. I initially chose you because your intended interview would have been-

DANA
A puff piece.

FRANK
We didn’t follow the stipulations set by Serena’s team.

Dana scoffs.

Frank now stands up from his chair to get Dana’s attention.

FRANK (CONT’D)
You went off book. You insinuating she was difficult to work with...

DANA
I checked with sources first!

Frank throws a pen at Dana, just missing her.
FRANK  
Don’t interrupt me anymore!  
According to Serena’s manager, you  
phrased almost every question  
differently than had been approved!

Frank makes his way around the desk to stand over Dana.

She grips onto the chair.

FRANK (CONT’D)  
I should just fire you to make  
recovery for FAME easier...

Frank goes back to sit at his desk, exhausted.

FRANK (CONT’D)  
But now that she’s a trending media  
sensation, Serena’s team has given  
FAME a lucrative proposition.

DANA  
What?

FRANK  
You have to give her another  
exclusive interview and you have to  
do it-

INT. SERENA BELL’S RECORDING STUDIO – CONTINUOUS

Douglas speaks over the microphone into Serena’s recording  
booth.

DOUGLAS  
–as scripted by our team.

INT. FRANK’S OFFICE – CONTINUOUS

Dana sits upright in her chair.

DANA  
Whatever happened to journalistic  
integrity? I can’t be attached to  
celebrity gossip forever! I want  
the chance to be... an actual, hard-  
hitting journalist.
INT. SERENA BELL’S RECORDING STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Serena is less than amused with Douglas’ comment. She looks up at the ceiling as if searching for a response.

SERENA
I think... I’d rather just take the cash.

DOUGLAS
Serena, think of it this way. You either have a chance for small monetary gain or you have leverage for a comeback with FAME magazine.

INT. FRANK’S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Frank remains unphased by her words.

FRANK
This was discussed by the board. It’s damage control. It’s either this or you’re out.

DANA
It’s just... the most...

Dana clenches her fist.

DANA (CONT’D)
Enraging thing... to do my job--well, I might add--and then be told that I’ve failed.

Frank reclines in his chair.

FRANK
A journalist looking for her undue praise. Give me something I haven’t heard before, Dereks.

DANA (CONT’D)
Fine, Frank. I’ll do the interview and prove myself once again.

Dana gets up from the chair.

DANA (CONT’D)
But I’ll be damned if all I do is suck up to her.

She exits Frank’s office, slamming the door on the way out.
INT. SERENA BELL’S RECORDING STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Serena muses over the possibility by tilting her head back and forth, weighing her own pros and cons.

She points at Douglas.

SERENA
Just so long as she doesn’t publicly humiliate me again, fine.

Serena’s phone vibrates. It is a message from Laura June.

“Serena, can you pick up Michelle today?”

“Tied up with Rick atm”

Serena smiles softly and picks up the phone to text back:

“Sure sis. Still see you at the party tonight though??”

Serena’s phone vibrates. “:)

Serena has a spark in her eyes and looks up at Douglas.

SERENA (CONT’D)
Now can we please do the song?

INT. SERENA BELL’S RECORDING STUDIO - LATER

Serena looks worn and dazed as she finishes recording the song.

SERENA
(sung)
I’ll serenade you... Yes, I’ll serenade you.

As the music finishes, Serena looks down at her hands.

DOUGLAS
That last take isn’t going to work, Serena. You want this to be your comeback album, right? Then you’ll have to care more about the pentatonic at the end than your cuticles.

SERENA
Look, we laid down the whole track today. I think it’s good to give it a rest and come back to finish the hardest part of it all tomorrow.
If you want to impress Richard, that’s not going to work.

Douglas, it’s seriously fine for today. Please. I have a headache and I have to pick up my niece.

RICHARD MICHAELS (35), enters the recording studio. Dressed in business casual, wearing a blazer, he holds an iPad.

Serena sees Richard and forces herself to perk up, coming out from the booth.

Richard, what brings you in?

Douglas, Serena. This hit the web an hour ago while you’ve been here in isolation.

He pulls open a video titled “Serena Bell is a B**ch!” on his iPad. The video clearly shows Serena pushing the woman aside.

Do you care to explain your behavior, Serena?

Serena grimaces and Douglas looks down, ashamed.

It was a misunderstanding—I-

Richard silences Serena with his gaze.

We need to get on this. Now. If we don’t, this will ruin any sympathy you had going for you with your GMA clusterf...

Richard catches himself.

Douglas, you said you have the vocals for her new single ready?

No. Not quite... But we’ve been working all day-

Richard turns to address Serena.
RICHARD
Marquina knows exactly how to make this your next big thing, Serena. She was more than willing to come in and master “Influence” tomorrow—even with her schedule as full as it is with Adele’s album. I told her as long as we finished the vocals—

Douglas looks alarmed.

DOUGLAS
Richard, there was a change... I told your assistant...

Richard crosses his arms, less than amused.

RICHARD
I’ve been out all day. Serena, what is it?

Serena approaches Richard.

SERENA
We decided to go with “Serenade.”

RICHARD
Douglas, could we have a word out in the hall for a moment?

Richard exits without waiting. The door closes.

Douglas hesitates, attempting to show respect for Serena. She waves him off as she rolls her eyes.

SERENA
Go.

Douglas quickly darts through the door.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO HALLWAY – CONTINUOUS

The door closes behind Douglas. Once again, Richard has crossed his arms.

RICHARD
You told me you had Serena under control. You said you were recording her new single.
DOUGLAS
Serena demanded—

RICHARD
Disregard what Serena thinks. We discussed this... We barely got Marquina to give us “Influence” as is.

DOUGLAS
Richard, Serena refused to record that song. I’ve been her manager her entire career and I know that when Serena wants something this badly she doesn’t budge.

Richard smirks and then proceeds back to the door.

RICHARD
Well then, she’s about to be humbled.

Douglas attempts to follow Richard back into the studio.

RICHARD (CONT’D)
Stay!

INT. SERENA BELL’S RECORDING STUDIO – CONTINUOUS

Richard enters through the door. As it closes, Richard pulls up legal documents on his iPad as he at Serena.

RICHARD
Serena, you’re losing fans.

Serena laughs.

SERENA
You’re kidding, right? I have—

RICHARD
No. You listen. Sit down.

He gestures to the couch and she follows his prompt.

RICHARD (CONT’D)
This isn’t your old label that catered to your every whim. I signed you under strict terms to do what is most profitable for me. “Serenade” is not lucrative. But everything has a price, I suppose.
He fiddles with the iPad and then hands it to Serena. She perplexedly looks at the document.

SERENA
What’s this?

RICHARD
It’s your contract to do “Dancing with the Stars.”

Richard paces back and forth in front of Serena.

RICHARD (CONT’D)
You weren’t supposed to announce a new project yet. But that was fine, because Douglas told me you actually came to lay out all the vocals today. But now you’re working on Colton’s “Serenade.”

He lurches into Serena’s space.

RICHARD (CONT’D) (CONT’D)
You know how Colton’s last singles charted?

Serena laughs again to try and ease the situation.

SERENA
I take it poorly.

Richard moves in tightly and clasps his hands together.

RICHARD
Not even. This isn’t a joke, Serena. It’s your career. You are losing money. If you don’t do the show, you don’t get the new record.

SERENA
Richard, I don’t want to do the show...

He pulls up a seat sitting across from her. Serena becomes increasingly tense.

RICHARD
I got the producers to wiggle in a performance by you during the finale. That should be enough to make your song chart.

Richard snatches his iPad and makes his way to the door.
RICHARD (CONT’D)
Call time for the press conference
is 8 A.M. tomorrow. I’ll give
Douglas the rest of the details. If
you aren’t there, I’ll assume we’ve parted ways.

SERENA
If you think it will make my album
stronger, then-

Richard exits, ignoring her.
The door closes and Serena is left behind alone in the room.

SERENA (CONT’D)
I’ll consider it...

Serena stares forward blankly.

INT. FAME MAGAZINE OFFICE SPACE – AFTERNOON

Dana sits at her well-kept, sterile desk, noticeably anxious,
while searching “Serena Bell” on the internet. She opens a
video titled “Serena Bell Proves She is a B**CH.”

As soon as she finishes watching, she hurries over to Frank’s office.

INT. FRANK’S OFFICE – CONTINUOUS

Dana knocks on the door and enters abruptly.

DANA
Frank-

Frank turns his monitor and faces Dana.

FRANK
I know, but you can’t do the story,
Dereks.

Dana approaches the desk, standing powerfully.

DANA
Don’t pull office politics with me,
Frank. Don’t subject me to
punishment because of the one
mistake.

Frank raises his hand and shakes his head disappointedly.
FRANK
Let me stop you there-

DANA
Frank, please let me cover this story. I can say something about celebrity. I’ll do a full-blown piece on Bell and I’ll do it as objectively as possible.

FRANK
And why should I trust you on this?

Dana’s eyes flare and she stands, crossing her arms proudly and facing Frank head-on.

DANA
Because this is print. Not only is it my medium, but you’ll clearly have final say.

Frank leans back in his chair.

FRANK
I suppose... But tread lightly, Dereks.

EXT. MICHELLE’S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Serena coolly walks over to the waiting area as the kids pile out onto the sidewalks. She wears her sunglasses and a scarf around her hair so as not to be recognized.

Many kids bustle out of the standard elementary school’s doors, but not Michelle. Serena watches longingly at all of the happy children greeting their parents.

In a flash, MICHELLE (8) rushes out of the doors. She shares the family resemblance of Serena and Laura June: long blonde hair and plump limps.

MICHELLE
Auntie Serena!

Just as Serena sees Michelle, Serena gives a huge grin. They run to each other and Michelle jumps into Serena’s arms.

SERENA
Hey there, cute thing!

She gives a few tiny kisses to Michelle, who laughs away all the while.
MICHELLE
I thought mom was supposed to pick me up...

SERENA
I know, I know... But Momma Laura wanted me to come pick you up instead since you are my favorite niece ever!

MICHELLE
Aren’t I your only niece?

SERENA
Well, yeah... But that doesn’t mean you still aren’t my favorite!

Serena winks and throws Michelle up in the air.

Michelle shrieks giddily before Serena catches her.

MICHELLE
You’re my favorite aunt too!
(beat)
Ooh! So, does this mean-

SERENA
Oh yeah!

MICHELLE
Yay! Let’s go!

EXT. ICE CREAM SHOP - LATER

Serena and Michelle exit the quaint shop together. Serena has a small milk shake in hand while Michelle has a three-scoop cone with all of the colors of the rainbow.

The two walk alongside the street together.

SERENA
It’s so pretty, are you sure you want to eat it?

Michelle stands in shock at what she just heard.

SERENA (CONT’D)
I’m kidding, silly. Of course, eat it!

Michelle starts to lick away madly at the cone.
SERENA (CONT’D)
But careful or you might get a brain freeze.

Michelle devours a whole scoop of ice cream and has remnants all over her mouth.

MICHELLE
Auntie Serena, do you like being famous?

Serena puckers her lips while thinking over a response.

SERENA
Well, I used to-

MICHELLE
No, now. What about now?

SERENA
Hm... No, not really I suppose.

MICHELLE
Then why be famous?

SERENA
Um... I kind of have to be, Michelle... I just am... With the contracts and business agreements, money... and all that other stuff... By being a good performer came this public presence that stays with me...

MICHELLE
But why if you don’t like it?

SERENA
Unfortunately, life isn’t about doing what you want all the time.

MICHELLE
Is it at least sometimes fun?

SERENA
It sometimes is, sure.

MICHELLE
Can it ever be super duper fun again?

SERENA
Maybe... I would hope so...
MICHELLE
What would make it fun?

SERENA
I think... recording some things that actually matter to the world... And giving people a reason to care.

Serena nods and Michelle follows suit, enraptured by what her aunt says.

SERENA (CONT’D)
Yeah.

MICHELLE
Yeah!

Michelle finishes the last bite of her cone.

SERENA
But enough about me, what do you want to do--aside from eating ice cream cones professionally?

Michelle giggles.

MICHELLE
Be a singer like you!

SERENA
And your mom...

MICHELLE
But you’re famous!

SERENA
I may be famous, but there’s a big difference between being famous and being celebrated for what you do.

MICHELLE
I don’t get it.

Serena squats down.

SERENA
Let’s put it this way: it’s hard for pretty blondes—

Serena gives Michelle a tap on the nose and Michelle squirms cheerfully.
SERENA (CONT’D)
Like you and me to get much notice
aside from just how pretty we are.

Michelle leaps in to give Serena a gigantic hug.

MICHELLE
But Auntie Serena, you’re the best
ever!

INT. WILLIAM’S CONDOMINIUM COMPLEX ELEVATOR – AFTERNOON

Dana, now with blown-back hair in a lace-knit dress, stands
swaying back-and-forth uncomfortably within the elevator
shaft.

INT. WILLIAM’S PENTHOUSE – CONTINUOUS

The doors open to reveal a metallic, robust space. The room
sprawls out so much so that it is not within the bounds of
eyesight.

Dana steps out, just enough to get out of the elevator, but
no farther.

She sees William sitting on the sofa with photos of the two
of them sprawled across the table.

WILLIAM
Good to see you, Dana.

DANA
I want to say the same...

Dana fumbles around in her purse for the invite, pulling it
out once she has discovered it.

DANA (CONT’D)
We said complete separation, Will.

WILLIAM
I know... I know... I’ve just been
reminiscing about the man I was.

Dana looks over to the living room and sees all of the
blissful photos of William and Katherine across the walls.

At various destinations across the world, the couple strike
differing poses, be it funny, daring, serious, or happy.
DANA
And so you invited me to your
wedding to bring back the past?

WILLIAM
No. Katherine wants your
forgiveness... I do too, Dana.

DANA
So you two won’t be ashamed of your
past together. I see.

WILLIAM
You have just become so cut off
from the world ever since-

DANA
Ever since I couldn’t give you a
child? Yes, William, I’m sorry but
when you can’t give your husband
the one thing he wants-

William advances to Dana and tries to hold her hands, but she
refuses contact.

WILLIAM
I never should have...

William shakes his head.

WILLIAM (CONT’D)
I just want you to be happy again.

DANA
I gave up my life... for you,
Will... I want you to have a
wonderful life, too, but there’s
nothing more you can do...

Dana turns around to the elevator and jabs the button.

WILLIAM
Christopher Savance.

Dana faces William once more.

DANA
How did you-

WILLIAM
You want more with her. You always
do...
DANA
You’re forcing my forgiveness on
you?

WILLIAM
Christopher Savance, the ex that
caused Serena Bell hellfire. It’s
your opportunity for more... A
total exclusive. It’s the only
collateral I have for you.

Dana wavers uneasily.

DANA
It must be so idyllic to be an
agent to the stars...

William laughs.

WILLIAM
It gives a lot more than it
takes...

Dana hesitates.

She locks eyes with William and the two stay in the moment,
until the elevator arrives.

DANA
Yes... William. I’ll attend... your
wedding.

Dana slips away into the elevator and the two awkwardly say
goodbye.

INT. MUSIC AWARDS PARTY – NIGHT

The vast room is dimly lit with multiple strobe lights going
on and off. The average age of those attending is 25.

On the stage at the front of the room, there is a large
overhead display that has categories such as “Best New
Artist” and “Best Album” with category nominees underneath
them.

Serena and Laura June each wear party dresses and have their
hair curled up. The two practically have to shout to hear one
another over the thudding of the speakers.

SERENA
So what do you think of this
whole... ultimatum Richard gave me?
LAURA JUNE
I know you don’t like reality, but couldn’t it benefit you? It’s more like a variety show than anything. Plus, you’re a big name and would likely be a shoo-in to win. Plus, it would re-brand you because it’s a very family-friendly show... It’s Michelle and Rick’s favorite! Don’t tell him I told you that though.

Serena’s eyes sparkle.

SERENA
Don’t worry, I won’t. Rick and “Dancing with the Stars.” Huh. You picked such a great guy...

LAURA JUNE
I sure did!

CHRISTOPHER SAVANCE (40), an attractive, athletic man who is dressed in a suit, approaches Serena and Laura June. He has a drink in hand.

LAURA JUNE (CONT’D)
Speaking of which-

CHRISTOPHER
Long time no see.

SERENA
That’s... for a reason.

CHRISTOPHER
Where’s your drink?

LAURA JUNE
She doesn’t drink anymore... And I think it’s already time for you to move on.

Christopher lifts his drink just so that it sloshes out of the glass. Serena and Laura June abruptly step back to avoid getting splashed.

CHRISTOPHER
Hey, just because she thinks that I cheated with Cassandra doesn’t mean I actually did.

SERENA
This isn’t the place, Chris.
Serena starts to turn around, but Laura June steps forward.

LAURA JUNE
Oh, really? Cassandra came forward
with a confession on that tour.

CHRISTOPHER
Look, she confessed to clear her
name from being thrown off Serena’s
tour.

Christopher raises his glass.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT’D)
Look how that worked out: cut short
and out of work... Cheers to that!

He downs the rest of the rum.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT’D)
Ah... That’s the stuff...

Christopher slams the glass down on a nearby table.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT’D)
Must be nice to have your little
sister being the one to fight your
battles for you, Serena.

Laura June grabs Serena, who is now in a daze.

LAURA JUNE
Let’s go.

Serena nods.

The two work their way through the crowd to get away from
Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER
(muffled in the
background)
Let’s not forget that I’m the one
nominated for Entertainer of the
Year tonight, ladies!

The crowd behind Serena and Laura June drowns Christopher out
in their clamoring over him.

Serena stops in her tracks.

SERENA
No. Laura June–
She finishes mid-sentence and goes back through the crowd towards Christopher, who has a new drink in hand.

Her heel breaks on the way there, causing Serena to trip onto Christopher’s chest.

CHRISTOPHER
You just can’t resist yourself, can you?

Serena pushes herself off of his chest.

SERENA
No...

Christopher plays to the crowd.

CHRISTOPHER
I’d give it another go.

Serena moves in closer proximity to him.

SERENA
No, Chris. That’s not it. You were so good to me... I wanted to marry you... so badly. And then you cheated and hid away from me...

She straightens her posture to stand as confidently as possible in her broken heel.

SERENA (CONT’D)
I can finally say that you don’t hold power over me anymore.

She fixes her dress, preparing to leave him once again.

CHRISTOPHER
But I do hold this over you.

Christopher lifts his arm up and dumps his drink on Serena’s hair.

The crowd laughs uproariously.

EXT. DANCING WITH THE STARS PRESS CONFERENCE LOT - MORNING

Pedro meticulously combs through Serena’s hair as they walk through the lot.

REPORTERS are just around the corner at the entrance to the press conference.
PEDRO
Luckily your hair doesn’t smell like schnapps anymore.

Serena stops as she sees the frenzy. Pedro follows suit.

She crouches down at a corner side of a building just out of sight of the reporters. Underneath the pair of sapphire sunglasses she has on, tears start to stream.

PEDRO (CONT’D)
Ms. Bell, what’s wrong?

SERENA
You know, there’s such a funny thing about fame, Pedro.

PEDRO
I understand, Ms. Bell, but you have to go out there now. They’re expecting you.

SERENA
See, you say you understand, but really, it’s just always... all these expectations... that you can’t ever live up to... People think they can just expect anything from you--to be their best friend, to sell out an arena, to pump out the next number one single...

Serena puts her hands on Pedro’s shoulders, placing her weight on him. He stumbles backwards under the pressure.

SERENA (CONT’D)
But, Pedro, I’m just one person.

She ducks her head down as tears pour out from her eyes.

SERENA (CONT’D)
Thanks for being here, Pedro. You really are one of my best friends.

Pedro looks up, unsure of what to say.

PEDRO
Ms. Bell... thank you... But, you know... it is my job.

Serena lifts her head up, wiping her tears away.
SERENA
Please don’t play games with me, Pedro. We’ve grabbed all those dinners together.

Pedro looks away nervously.

SERENA (CONT’D)
You’ve never thought of me as a friend, just your employer?

Pedro points around the corner.

PEDRO
Ms. Bell, you are amazing, truly. I love working for you... You’re probably the best person I’ve ever worked for... But we really should be getting in there.

SERENA
Yeah... We really should.

Serena pieces herself together and the two start proceeding to the entrance.

As they walk, she transitions herself far in front of Pedro—as though the two of them are now strangers walking separately from one another.

PEDRO
Your hair looks great!

SERENA
(under her breath)
Yeah, ‘cause it’s your job...

Serena gives no response to the numerous reporters that envelop her as she enters.

INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS PRESS CONFERENCE – LATER

Serena stands at the podium with cameras set directly on her. She has a pleasant smile plastered on her face.

Dana stands to get Serena’s attention, yet Serena glances past her and points at the REPORTER directly behind Dana.

REPORTER
What are your thoughts on the competition? To get a star such as yourself... that’s quite a feat.
SERENA
Well, I’m ambivalent about all this. I’ve refused reality before because I really am a private person-

REPORTER
But wouldn’t you say there are any positives to being in this cast? It seems to be much more dynamic than ever before.

SERENA
Well, what’s really cool is that my greatest hits CD, with a new lead single, will be released the day the competition starts. Then, my newest album will come out on the last day of our competition. It’s pretty great-

REPORTER
But what about the competition itself?

SERENA
AND, I can’t wait to sing at the finale... But aside from that, it’s going to be fun to learn some new moves I can incorporate on my next tour. Definitely.

She nods convincingly as Dana decides to speak without acknowledgement.

DANA
What is your primary aim in competing?

Serena lets her happy facade crumble as she turns to address Dana, but by the time she speaks again she has put a smile back on her face.

SERENA
I really can’t wait to show people how tough I really am... that I can take on any challenge and succeed.

DANA
So you are saying that this is the comeback for Serena Bell?
SERENA
I wouldn’t say it’s a comeback. I was never gone. I would call this-

REPORTER
Career rejuvenation?

Serena laughs the remark off.

SERENA
Good one... No, I would say that this gives me a chance to branch out in ways I haven’t been able to since my album, “Travails.” You can really get pegged into one niche category in this industry. But I’ve never really been one for convention, so...

Serena pauses dramatically.

SERENA (CONT’D)
Are you ready for the headline?

Pens are opened.

Recorders are held up even higher than before.

Reporters lean in on the edge of their seats.

SERENA (CONT’D)
“Dancing with the Stars” will be the dance of my life.

A PRODUCTION ASSISTANT cues Serena that her time is up.

SERENA (CONT’D)
Thanks for having me! Off to my first rehearsal. I’ll see you out there.

Serena twirls off of the stage, which garners a few laughs from some reporters.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO – MORNING

Serena is in the midst of putting the finishing touches on “Serenade” as Douglas stands outside the recording booth.
Douglas

Serena, I’ve got to say this is the best I’ve heard you sound in a while. That... and you’re here at 6 A.M. in the morning.

Serena looks up beaming.

Serena

Thanks, Douglas. Yeah, I’ve got to head out to the dance studio like right now, so is that a wrap on “Serenade”?

Douglas

I think it is.

Serena walks out of the booth while massaging her neck.

Douglas (Cont’d)

You’re not under too much stress, are you?

Serena

No, I don’t think so--just a neck cramp is all.

She waves it off and sits down.

Serena (Cont’d)

Okay, let’s talk about some of the songs for the rest before I head out.

Douglas sits down next to her and pulls out the song-list.

Douglas

Well obviously the next single is “Influence.”

Serena nods, non-argumentatively.

Serena

Richard wouldn’t have it any other way--

Douglas

Right. And he called me today to tell you that he wants the direction of this album to be more in-line with your pop peers.

Serena looks up at Douglas alertly.
SERENA
No. Douglas, no. This was supposed to be my chance to do another edgy, vocal album like “Travails.”

DOUGLAS
But “Dancing Sound” had the most commercial success.

SERENA
That was back when “I’m still Jenny from the Block” was the shit... Now that line is just... shit... Doesn’t that say something about “Dancing Sound”?

Serena glances down at the list of songs.

SERENA (CONT’D)
Not to say I don’t like that album, but I really think we should move away from that sound.

She nods while perusing the first few songs until-

SERENA (CONT’D)
Wait! What happened to “I Need You to Fix Me,” “Restless,” and “One Kiss and Goodbye”? I was supposed to finish my co-write on those!

Douglas stays silent.

SERENA (CONT’D)
Without those, this album is going to be the next... well, the next “Britney Jean.” I was going to bring meaning and personality to those songs-

DOUGLAS
Look, I got Richard to keep “Flash” and “No Way.”

SERENA
Those were dance interlude songs... This sheet is full of them!

Serena crumples up the list and throws it into the garbage.
SERENA (CONT’D)
Innovation, Douglas, remember? The key word behind “Serenade”’s direction was innovation. That song list is anything but...

DOUGLAS
I’m sorry, Serena. Richard has you on a tight leash-

Serena stands up and grabs her things.

SERENA
Look, for the next two weeks I’m booked with rehearsal for this show learning the first routines. I’ll settle this with Richard myself somewhere in between.

Serena storms out the door.

EXT. DANCING WITH THE STARS LOT - EVENING

MIRANDA TRIBEKA (35) saunters out of the studio as she follows behind Serena, also leaving, at the end of the day.

MIRANDA
Good night, Valentin. See you tomorrow for the dress rehearsal!

Miranda blows a kiss before shifting her focus onto Serena.

Serena recognizes the voice and tries to speed up to get to her car.

MIRANDA (CONT’D)
Serena! Haven’t seen you at all in the competition yet.

Miranda runs to catch up with Serena as she wraps her arm around Serena.

Serena winces.

SERENA
Yeah, I’ve been busy doing this and my album... But we were bound to run into one another sooner or later.

MIRANDA
Well, I just wanted to say it’s so good to see you again...

(MORE)
MIRANDA (CONT'D)
And that I’m so that I beat you out
for that Broadway part after...
Well... you know.

Miranda laughs spitefully.

SERENA
Do we really need a recap of my
life here? We both know what
happened.

MIRANDA
(whispered)
It’s for them.

Miranda gestures to the two “Dancing with the Stars”
CAMERAMEN that follow behind.

SERENA
Sure it is-

MIRANDA
It’s actually kinda’ funny. Before
that picture scandal, you were
supposedly prepped for a Tony-
nominated run... But then again, I
must commend you for turning that
whole mishap into the headline of
the year, maybe even the decade.

She winks at Serena and then lets go, walking in a different
direction to her car.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
And I do owe you my thanks for that
first Tony. So thank you. Who
knows? Maybe, just maybe, you’ll...
win this? That’s a consolation,
right?

Serena gets into her car and slams the door shut.

INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS BALLROOM - NIGHT

A pre-recorded voice over, announcing the new season of
“Dancing with the Stars” plays overhead as the production
team prepares for the first night of competition.

Judges CARRIE ANN INABA (50), LEN GOODMAN (70), and BRUNO
TONIOLI (50) are in their seats underneath the luminous
lights.
TOM BERGERON (60) and ERIN ANDREWS (30) stand to the left side of the ballroom floor as the cameras pan on them. A CAMERA MAN gestures “3, 2, 1” and points to Tom.

The CROWD in the background suddenly roars with cheering.

TOM
Welcome to the season premiere of “Dancing with the Stars”! I am your host, Tom Bergeron.

ERIN
And I am Erin Andrews.

TOM
This is surely a season that guarantees to surprise... But it’s also the most jam-packed premiere we’ve ever had! We’re playing beat the clock right from the start... So, let’s get right to it. Without further adieu, let’s welcome our stars!

The cheering grows even louder as the couples descend the stairs to get to their places on the ballroom floor.

INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS BALLROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Miranda and VALENTIN CHMERKOVSKIY (30) both do jazz hands as they come out.

TOM
Two-time Tony winner Miranda Tribeka and Valentin Chmerkovskiy.

Serena and Tristan are the last couple out.

Serena is dressed in a ragged black dress while Tristan wears a casual pair of white jeans and a t-shirt.

TOM (CONT’D)
World-renowned singer and Grammy nominee Serena Bell and Tristan MacManus.

Serena waves at the cameras cutely, while simultaneously, looking at the staircase so she does not unintentionally fall.

While descending, Serena performs a choreographed fall into Tristan’s arms, who carries her down the rest of the way.
Serena points at the camera.

Once down on the ballroom floor, Tristan launches Serena up and she lands down in a spin.

The celebrities all stand center-stage as Tom and Erin face the cameras once again.

TOM (CONT’D)
Now, as you may have noticed at home, this season has the least amount of couples since our second season.

Tom holds up his hands with his fingers.

TOM (CONT’D)
(jokingly)
That’s ten years.

The cameras flash over the celebrities who are playing to the cameras for the fans.

ERIN
With the cap at ten, it means that each week, one couple will be going home and the finals will be the most intense competition yet for our final two stars.

TOM
We’ve also gone a bit “Dancing with the Stars” Retro if you haven’t noticed, with esteemed judge Len Goodman’s return.
(sarcastically)
He didn’t want to come back at all.

Tom and Erin laugh along with Len and the audience.

Erin gives Tom a pat on the shoulder.

ERIN
I’m glad you twisted his arm there... As for the competition, let’s start with the star who brought us “Dancing Sound,” and who was nominated for a Grammy shortly thereafter.

TOM
Her single, “Serenade,” just dropped... today of all days!
(MORE)
TOM (CONT'D)
Let’s look at what brought Serena Bell to the dancing stage.

The screens flash with Serena’s package.

INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS CONFESSIONAL - AFTERNOON
Serena sits facing the camera with wild hair.

SERENA
I’m probably best known for my Grammy-nominated albums, “Dancing Sound” and “Travails.”

The screen transitions from music video to music video, showing scattered shots of Serena dancing and singing.

INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING
Serena’s comment plays back.

SERENA
Well, I’m ambivalent about all this. I’ve refused reality before because I really am a private person-

INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS CONFESSIONAL - AFTERNOON
A jump-cut reverts back to Serena’s interview.

SERENA
But if we’re being honest, I definitely think this show will help enhance my performance... and my inner worth.

The camera shifts focus to TRISTAN MACMANUS (30), who does a double reverse spin.

TRISTAN
I’m Tristan MacManus. I’ve been on the show since the thirteenth season.
(beat)
I’m excited to work with Serena because she is most definitely a performer.
INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS STUDIO - AFTERNOON

There is playback of Serena twirling into the studio and seeing Tristan. He gives her a hug.

TRISTAN
Well hi there.

SERENA
Hi! Nice to meet you.

TRISTAN
So, what brought you into doing this?

Serena bites her nails.

SERENA
The more I think about it... the more I realize this will be my ultimate chance to show everyone I can still dominate the dance floor.

INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS STUDIO - AFTERNOON

Tristan walks over and sits down by a distraught Serena.

TRISTAN (V.O.)
Though I quickly learned that Serena has some inner demons to shake.

Tristan leans in to talk to her.

TRISTAN
What’s wrong?

SERENA
I’m just nothing anymore... It’s not coming together...

TRISTAN
Serena, it’s only the third day...

Serena tears off her mic pack and squeamishly avoids the cameras as she goes to the door.

SERENA
This... This was a mistake.

She exits.
INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS STUDIO HALLWAY - LATER

Serena walks through the hallway to make an exit, but falls to the ground.

SERENA (V.O.)
Tristan told me that I owed this to myself... And he’s right.

Tristan comes from behind and crouches to speak to Serena.

TRISTAN
Serena, that was one mistake. And do you know how much content I’ve packed into this routine because you’ve been able to handle it? The sheer amount of effort you’ve put into this dance... everyone will see that come show time.

He extends his hand.

TRISTAN (CONT’D)
Trust me.

As the cameras show Serena take Tristan’s hand, her voice-over plays.

SERENA (V.O.)
There was a time when I was a world renowned performer--one who everyone thought was undefeatable.

INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS CONFESSIONAL - CONTINUOUS

Serena cranes into the camera.

SERENA
I. Still. Am.

INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS BALLROOM - NIGHT

Serena and Tristan stand barefoot on the platform above the ballroom ready to perform.

Dim lights glow over them.

VOICE (V.O.)
Dancing Contemporary, Serena Bell and her partner, Tristan MacManus.
The orchestration for “Travails” swells as Serena runs forward. Tristan flings himself off of the top stage and catches Serena as she falls.

She purposefully collapses to the ground and extends her arms in bold movements, moving opposite Tristan’s motions to lift her.

As the bridge leads into the final lyric, Serena rolls forward into a lift. Tristan throws her up as she twists around him in mid-air.

At the end of the song, Serena stands back to back with Tristan, with both supporting one another in a counterbalance system.

The audience stands to their feet and erupts in applause as Serena and Tristan make their way to the judges’ table.

Carrie Ann Inaba is also standing in ovation.

Both Serena and Tristan are out of breath.

From out of nowhere, Tom appears.

    TOM
    You two get a moment of reprieve.
    We’ll be right back.

INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS BALLROOM - LATER

Tom, Serena, and Tristan stand in front of the judges table.

    TOM
    The first dance of the season and already three for three with the judges! Wow. Way to go you two. If this is any indication of the season we’re about to have...

Tom glances down at his notecards.

    TOM (CONT’D)
    Now, we took note of total hours put in by all the couples in the competition and you succeeded them by more than 75 hours these first few weeks.

Serena and Tristan look at one another, pleasantly surprised.
SERENA
I really wanted to show everyone my dedication to all of this. No reporters, no paparazzi, no mis...perceptions or anything like that... Just pure commitment.

Serena leans into Tristan to give him a firm hug.

TOM
And let me be the first to say--to both of you--we are all incredibly grateful you let us in on that journey. Now, let’s get your scores.

Serena hesitantly lifts her head from Tristan and faces the judges’ table.

VOICE (V.O.)
Will the judges please reveal their scores?
(beat)
Carrie Ann Inaba.

Carrie Ann enthusiastically pulls out her “10” paddle.

CARRIE ANN
Cleansing, truly. Ten.

Len Goodman lets out his classic “Oh!” as the audience cheers loudly.

Serena has a huge smile on her face and jumps into hug Tristan.

VOICE (V.O.)
Len Goodman.

Len takes out his “9” paddle.

LEN
Nine.

VOICE (V.O.)
Bruno Tonioli.

Bruno reveals his “9” paddle.

BRUNO
Nine.

Tom turns to face Serena and Tristan and gives her a pat on the back.
TOM
For a total of twenty-eight out of thirty points... That is the highest first night score in the history of our show! Congratulations! Thoughts?

Serena has tears falling out of her eyes. She turns to the cameras.

SERENA
All I have to say is... Thank you.

She turns back to Tristan to share in the joy as Tom faces Carrie Ann.

TOM
Just getting that first ten of the season right out of the way, aren’t we, Carrie Ann?

CARRIE ANN
I guess we are. But that dance was screaming, “Give me a ten! Give me a ten! Argh!” I just had too!

TOM
That might be something we need to get checked out later... But I suppose if anyone knew a dance’s screams... it would... be you...

Tom and Carrie Ann share a look before breaking into laughter.

Still chuckling, Tom tenderly faces the cameras once again.

TOM (CONT’D)
And... With that... something I must truly say has been a favorite moment in all of “Dancing with the Stars” for me... Let me remind you... If you want more of this, folks, you gotta’ vote for it.

INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS BALLROOM - LATER

Douglas rushes to Serena as soon as the cameras shut off at the end of the evening. He pulls her over to the side.
DOUGLAS
Serena, I did some digging into Dana Dereks’ background after sending over the new questions... Did you know she’s the woman who took those photos you didn’t want released?

SERENA
That’s her?! But I thought she was a reporter... not a photographer—

DOUGLAS
You wouldn’t believe how she’s just gone from job to job.

SERENA
That’s why she was so tough on me...

DOUGLAS
But now I can make enough of a case to get you your perfect interview.

Serena looks at him with optimism, but then sternly shakes her head.

SERENA
No. Douglas... I think I’ve got this one.

DOUGLAS
You’re sure?

SERENA
Remember what I said at the end of my package tonight? I am undefeatable, Douglas... It just took this show to help me realize that.

She gives Douglas a big hug, to which Douglas doesn’t know quite how to respond.

Right afterwards, Serena sees Tristan walking away and pursues him.

SERENA (CONT’D)
Tristan—

Serena turns back to Douglas.
SERENA (CONT’D)
I’ll see you Wednesday to start working on more songs for the album, right?

Serena turns and runs toward Tristan.

SERENA (CONT’D)
Tristan, to the studio!

TRISTAN
You’ve got it.

EXT. MUSIC VIDEO SHOOT – EVENING

Dana, hair down and wearing a romper, walks on set and sits in an unoccupied seat.

Christopher has thirty DANCERS that swarm around him as he himself does a cha cha with CASSANDRA (30).

The set is bright and full of popping colors. Each dancer wears a slightly different outfit, with Christopher wearing a neon combination composed primarily of orange.

CHRISTOPHER
(sung)
Sex, Flesh... Flesh, Sex... Sex, Flesh... Flesh, Sex.

Christopher ends in a dip with Cassandra facing the camera.

DIRECTOR
And cut! That’s a wrap... Thank you everyone.

Christopher lifts Cassandra up and sets her onto a table. She strikes a suggestive pose.

CHRISTOPHER
Cassandra, that was hot as fuck out there.

CASSANDRA
Oh yeah, baby.

CHRISTOPHER
Look, I have to do this interview tonight, but tomorrow?

Cassandra flips her hair.
CASSANDRA
  Mm... you know it.

Christopher transitions over to Dana.

He doesn’t really acknowledge her presence until they shake hands.

DANA
  Hello. I’m Dana.

Christopher steps back.

CHRISTOPHER
  Fu... Will never said anything about his ex being so... hot.

DANA
  Thanks? Now, shouldn’t we... get to... work?

She gestures over to vacant seats.

CHRISTOPHER
  I just had a better idea. Let me take you out and we can talk over dinner.

He reaches for her arm, but she shirks away.

DANA
  I... don’t think so.

CHRISTOPHER
  Come on. How often does a beautiful reporter such as yourself get to enjoy a client at any dining establishment she desires?

DANA
  Don’t you have plans with that one... over there?

She points to Cassandra, who is now walking away.

CHRISTOPHER
  Oh. Cassandra? No... It just... comes with the territory.

He gives a dapper smile.
DANA
Still... I think it would be best to keep this a simple interview and then you’re free to do whatever you’d like.

Christopher pulls out his phone and preoccupies himself.

CHRISTOPHER
Look... In all seriousness, I did this as a favor to Will. I’ve had a long day on set. I’m sure you’ve had a long day too. I’d like this to be less work, more play. I’ll give you a full, candid exclusive... But you gotta’ give me somethin’ in return.

Christopher starts to walk away, making a phone call.

Dana stands there, frustrated.

Then, she pursues him.

DANA
Christopher, wait...

Christopher puts the phone down and faces Dana.

DANA (CONT’D)
As long as we stay focussed...

CHRISTOPHER
I’d say it’s a deal, but I don’t want to lie to you.

Christopher starts to walk away to his trailer.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT’D)
Just let me change into something... More appropriate. I’ll be right back.

Dana rolls her eyes as he walks off to his trailer.

DANA
(under her breath)
And here I thought your plan was to woo me with that unique sense of fashion.

Christopher overhears the remark. He turns once more, but continues walking backwards to his trailer.
CHRISTOPHER
If you think I have to rely on gimmicks to charm you...

Dana gawks, petrified. She gives a forced smile as Christopher reaches his trailer.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT’D)
Then you’re in for trouble.

Christopher gives her a wink and goes inside.

DANA
I’m sure I am... Either way.

INT. SERENA BELL’S HOME - NIGHT

The telephone rings as Serena practices dance moves over and over by herself.

She deliberately lets the call go to voice-mail.

RICHARD (V.O.)
I figured as much.

The phone clicks as Richard hangs up.

The doorbell rings.

Serena cringes. She sees Richard through the glass.

Richard waves cunningly as Serena frowns.

She slowly treks to the door, opening it, but keeping herself guarded from allowing Richard to enter into her home.

RICHARD
You were the one who wanted to see me after all, weren’t you? You’ve just been too busy dancing to give me any time other than a phone call. But now’s a good time, isn’t it?

Serena tries to come up with a reason why not, but fails.

RICHARD (CONT’D)
Of course it is.

Richard pushes himself into Serena’s home and marches into the living room.
RICHARD (CONT’D)
Turn on channel nine.

Serena runs for the remote to beat Richard to it, quickly turning on the television.

On Channel Nine is a cross between a TMZ and talk-show, called TWO. HAROLD (30) and FRED (30) host.

HAROLD
And what about this supposed comeback from Serena Bell?

The crowd moans and boos. Fred gestures the audience to quiet down.

FRED
I mean, there’s a reason why some artists are still relevant in our minds after all these years and why Serena Bell is fading fast.

HAROLD
But don’t all artists have a shelf-life?

SERENA
This is what I’m telling you, Richard. I need to change myself with this new album.

RICHARD
I couldn’t agree more.

SERENA
Wha-?

Richard grabs the remote out of Serena’s hand and turns up the volume.

RICHARD
Watch.

FRED
In order to stay relevant, they need to continually churn out new sounds.

HAROLD
And you’re saying that Bell has become her own worst enemy in recording?
FRED
I mean, the reason why her first album was so successful both commercially and critically was because it helped make pop more soulful. Other than that and “Dancing Sound,” all she’s tried to do is re-capture that pinnacle of her greatness. She’s living in the past.

Richard nods at the television and points, before muting it.

RICHARD
Your third and fourth albums... They were this prolonged experiment with pop that led to diminishing returns for your last label.

SERENA
So instead of actually choosing some edgy new songs, you want me to, what, follow the rest of the pop world now?

RICHARD
Don’t you get it, Serena? You trying to be edgy is expected. It’s boring. You’ll fail. You need high synths, strong beats. This is your last chance for success. You have to blend in on the radio or-

Serena catches a glimpse of her performance on the television screen.

SERENA
Wait, wait, wait...

There is a glimmer of hope in her eyes as she grabs the remote back and turns the volume back up.

FRED
That performance may have been the real deal. It gave us that old Serena we’ve been waiting for. But that comment about her being indifferent about the show...

SERENA
What? I never said that.

She reaches for Richard.
SERENA (CONT’D)
I never said that!

RICHARD
This shouldn’t be a news flash to you, Serena. Whatever you said, in this industry, you need to be prepared for people to twist your words.

FRED
She’s isolated the public with comments like these.

A chart flashes on the screen, showing Serena’s greatest hits album at forty-seven and the single at ninety-nine.

FRED (CONT’D)
Just look at that chart performance of her greatest hits and the new single even after her joining this show. “Serenade” may be heralded by critics, but it struck a sour note with audiences.

HAROLD
That’s... pretty shameful.

FRED
The only way I see Serena Bell being relevant again is for her to get some tried and true hit makers on this next album. I repeat-

Serena tries to blink away the tears forming in her eyes as she turns off the television.

SERENA
Richard...

RICHARD
Yes, Serena?

SERENA
If you let me put “Restless” and “One Kiss and Goodbye” on the album-

RICHARD
On the deluxe edition.

Fear strikes Serena’s face. She contemplates.
SERENA
On the... On the deluxe edition...
Then... I’ll do the rest of the album... your way.

Richard walks back to the door.

RICHARD
(over his shoulder)
I’ll need that in writing. I’ll send the papers over to Douglas tomorrow.

INT. THE IVY - NIGHT

The restaurant is packed, as usual, but highly stylized and elegant.

Dana and Christopher sit in a booth, somewhat isolated and by themselves.

In front of Dana is an exquisitely prepared salmon entree, while Christopher has an array of seafood in front of him.

Dana has her notebook and pen out next to her recorder. She has a few notes scribbled down already.

DANA
Okay... so you readily admit--on the record--that you cheated on Serena with just one month before your wedding?

Christopher has a hint of sadness about him before he answers.

CHRISTOPHER
I do.

DANA
Any excuse? Any rationale?

CHRISTOPHER
No... It’s not fair for me to say anything bad about her in that relationship... She was always great to me... But... Maybe there was this fear--or this panic--that she would cheat on me like she did with that big shot boyfriend a few years before me...
DANA
Trey Jones?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah... him... So I screwed her up before she could screw me...

DANA
You attribute that to why she became so... unhinged?

CHRISTOPHER
You mean with the pictures and the group-

Dana nods to cut him off.

DANA
And the drugs.

CHRISTOPHER
I wasn’t a good influence on her... Let’s... Let’s just leave it at that.

Christopher looks down at his drink and finishes it off.

DANA
Can I just ask one more question?

Christopher nods.

DANA (CONT’D)
So Serena turned to that to cope for loss of?

CHRISTOPHER
Family... She wanted a family... With me...

Christopher pulls out his phone and shows Dana a picture of Serena and him in a baby apparel store.

The two have the happiest expressions on their faces as humanly possible.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT’D)
That was her... our dream.

He drops the phone on the table next to him.

Something almost imperceptible changes within Dana as she writes down “Family” larger than anything else on the page. She underlines the word twice.
Dana then reaches for the recorder to turn it off.

DANA
Thanks-

Christopher lurches his hand in to stop her.
He keeps his hand on hers, to which she doesn’t quite know how to react.

CHRISTOPHER
No... I wanna’ say one more thing... You know... I don’t think Serena’s all about the celebrity lifestyle and the glory... She loves her music... and she wants to make a difference... But before all that... She cares about those closest to her... She cares about her family.

Silence overtakes the two of them, at which point Dana removes her hand and the recorder from underneath him.

DANA
Thank you-

CHRISTOPHER
No! Let me finish... Sometimes... I think she self-sabotages--like with Trey--so she can... get back to a normal life... You know? But... I think with this last time... with me... I... broke her...

Dana turns off the recorder and tries to fully assess him.

DANA
It’s kind of... refreshing to see a man take responsibility for his actions.

CHRISTOPHER
Thanks...

He slams his hands on the table and gets up.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT’D)
I gotta’ go to the bathroom... I’ll be right back.

Dana takes a sip of wine and sits back, reflecting on the conversation.
She then takes out her pocket-sized mirror, touching up her hair and makeup.

Then, Christopher’s phone vibrates.

Dana glowers at the phone as she sees a small-sized, yet fully visible, picture of Cassandra in her bra.

The phone vibrates again.

This time, it is a text from Cassandra: “I’ve officially decided I’m bored tonight. So, if plans change....”

Without hesitation, Dana grabs her belongings and leaves.

Almost immediately after, Christopher returns, baffled.

He grabs his phone and sees the message.

\[ \text{CHRISTOPHER (CONT’D)} \]

\[ \text{Shit!} \]

Christopher grabs his wallet from his pocket and drops three hundred dollars on the table.

He runs out of the restaurant.

\[ \text{EXT. THE IVY – CONTINUOUS} \]

Christopher sees Dana waiting for the VALET to deliver her car.

\[ \text{CHRISTOPHER} \]

\[ \text{Dana... It’s not like that.} \]

\[ \text{DANA} \]

\[ \text{Really? How is it not like that?} \]

\[ \text{CHRISTOPHER} \]

\[ \text{It’s not exclusive with Cassandra.} \]

\[ \text{DANA} \]

\[ \text{Very classy.} \]

\[ \text{CHRISTOPHER} \]

\[ \text{No... I know...} \]

\[ \text{DANA} \]

\[ \text{Look, I appreciate your time, Christopher. But I don’t know quite what you’re looking for with me now... Meaningless sex?} \]
CHRISTOPHER
No.

DANA
A relationship?

CHRISTOPHER
Um... No... Well... Maybe?

Dana’s car arrives as she pieces it all together.
She turns to the valet and gives him a twenty.

DANA
May I have one more moment, please?

VALET
Take your time, Miss.

DANA
Thank you.

Dana steps forward to Christopher.

DANA (CONT’D)
That’s... not what this is about.
You... you aren’t over her.

Christopher shrugs back.

CHRISTOPHER
Ugh...

DANA
You know it. I know it. But
Christopher, if you ever want a
shot of winning her back... Hook
ups, alcohol, drugs, and who knows
what else--it isn’t going to help
you.

CHRISTOPHER
You’re wrong.

DANA
You’re in denial. My advice: go to
rehab and come back the man you
should be for her... Not whatever
you are now.

Dana gets into the car.
A glimpse of a tear can be seen as she drives off.
INT. SERENA BELL’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The doorbell rings continuously.

Serena lies in bed as she stares at the ceiling. Mascara has run down her face.

The telephone rings and Serena lets it go to voicemail.

   DANA (V.O.)
   Serena, this is Dana Dereks. I’m at your door. Would you please let me in?
   (beat)
   Look, I need to address some things with you.

Serena furrows her eyebrow as she rolls out of bed.

She puts on a pair of jeans and a loose long-sleeve shirt and walks to the front door.

INT. SERENA BELL’S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Serena opens the front door.

   DANA
   May I come in?

Serena gives a nod as Dana proceeds through the door frame.

   DANA (CONT’D)
   First of all, I wanted to say that I am sorry. In a sense. For the photos I took... for them leaking-

   SERENA
   I paid to obtain all those copies and the next day they still came out.

   DANA
   I know. But it wasn’t me. The only reason I took those photos in the first place was because I received a call from your manager...

   SERENA
   Douglas? I find that hard to believe...

   DANA
   No... Um... It was some woman...
SERENA
I’ve never had a female manager, it’s always been Douglas-

DANA
You’re sure?

SERENA
He discovered me, Dana.

DANA
Well... regardless, I was paid by someone on your team just for being there to take the photos.

Serena walks to the kitchen as Dana stays standing near the entrance of the house, looking at her surroundings.

After a moment, she goes to the kitchen herself.

INT. SERENA BELL’S KITCHEN – CONTINUOUS

Serena gets a dish of creme brulee from the refrigerator and a blowtorch.

SERENA
Okay... And so then you took the photos and got paid by me-

The light flickers from the blowtorch.

Dana stands, stupefied and horrified at the same time.

DANA (O.S.)
And I sent the SD card over to you. Those were exclusive to that SD card.

Serena laughs as she carelessly throws her hand with the blowtorch up in the air.

SERENA
I know it wasn’t you.

Serena looks intently at the flame.

DANA
So... If you aren’t accusing me... It had to have been... You.

Serena pulls the blowtorch closer as she starts crying.
SERENA
I was under a lot of pressure... I just... I needed a way out for a bit.

DANA
But then I got accused of being a peeping Tom... You sent my promising career out the door because I lost all credibility.

Serena shakes her head.

SERENA
It wasn’t supposed to get so out of control... I had a contract to do that show for two years if I were cast... I was a shoe-in... and I just... I needed a way out. I promise you I just wanted out of the gig... not to lose work for five years myself. And I never would’ve wanted to harm anyone else’s career... your career.

DANA
But you did-

SERENA
Photos get leaked all the time and it’s never the photographer who takes the blame.

DANA
They do when they get paid to give sole ownership to the celebrity and then the photos still get leaked!

Serena pulls the blowtorch dangerously closer until Dana runs to smack it out of her hands.

DANA (CONT’D)
What are you doing?!

SERENA
What else can I say? I’m sorry...

Serena falls to the ground and starts laughing at herself.

SERENA (CONT’D)
But you got back at me with that interview. I thought that I was better... but look at me now.
DANA
That’s why I came here.

Dana removes her notebook and pen from her briefcase and sits down next to Serena on the floor.

Serena turns her head to face Dana.

SERENA
What do you mean?

DANA
If you are willing to let me, I still have a cover story and an interview with you... I spoke to Christopher... And... I now understand you better because of it.

Serena wipes her tears away.

SERENA
You... You do?

DANA
I do. And I am... I apologize for what I’ve done to you as well... But... for this coverage, I want it to reveal you in ways that your team hasn’t allowed for up to now. Will you be with me on this?

Serena contemplates, looking away from Dana completely as if in her own world.

Finally, she whips her head directly back to Dana.

SERENA
Ye-yes.

DANA
For all of this, I want to examine Serena the person versus Serena the celebrity.

INT. SERENA BELL’S HOME – EVENING

Serena waltzes with Michelle round about the living room.

Then, in place, she guides Michelle in a few foundational moves of the Waltz.
After twirling Michelle about ten times, Michelle drops to the ground.

MICHELLE
I’m dizzy!

SERENA
I’m sure you are...

Serena stands directly over Michelle.

SERENA (CONT’D)
You know, you’ve been working as hard as me at this number... How about you, your momma, and your pappa come on Monday to see it?

Michelle bounces up and squeezes Serena in a hug.

MICHELLE
Really?!

SERENA
Yes! Really! But... What... happened to being dizzy?

Michelle takes a dramatic step back.

MICHELLE
Auntie Serena, it’s Dancing with the Stars. Dizziness can wait.

SERENA
That’s right! I forgot! Silly me! Nothing’s more important than Dancing with the Stars! I probably should kick you out and get back to the routine then, shouldn’t I?

MICHELLE
Nononononono! Just... I’ll practice with you some more!

Michelle grabs Serena by the hands.

SERENA
Well, there’s a bit of a height difference between you and Tristan here... But we can make it work.

Serena takes Michelle’s hands and places them on her waist.
SERENA (CONT’D)
But we’re gonna’ need to do this right or Tristan will be mad at me tomorrow!

MICHELLE
Okay, okay!

The two start waltzing around the room again.

After a few steps, Serena looks at Michelle in admiration.

SERENA
You know--other than Dancing with the Stars--nothing’s more important to me in this whole world than you and your momma.

MICHELLE
To me neither!

SERENA
Nothing’s more important than family, right?

MICHELLE
Right!

Serena lifts Michelle up into her arms to give her a kiss.

MICHELLE (CONT’D)
Wait, wait, wait! There’s no way you’re gonna’ lift him up like me...

Serena gives a deadpan expression.

MICHELLE (CONT’D)
Are you?

Michelle eyes Serena suspiciously.

Serena eyes Michelle suspiciously right back.

SERENA
Nope! That’s a Michelle-only kinda’ thing!

The doorbell rings.

Serena drops Michelle to the ground as she sees Laura June at the door.
SERENA (CONT’D)
That’s your momma!

Serena starts for the door, but Michelle clutches her, acting as a deadweight.

MICHELLE
No, Auntie Serena! I never see you anymore!

SERENA
She’s right at the door, Michelle! I have to get it.

MICHELLE
Please!!!

SERENA
How ‘bout we see what she has to say first? Stay here for a second and I’ll talk to her, okay?

MICHELLE
K.

Michelle jumps off of Serena and rushes back to the living room sofa to secretly watch what is about to happen.

Serena arrives at the door and opens it.

SERENA
So good to see you, sis!

Serena and Laura June hug.

LAURA JUNE
It’s been a while.

SERENA
Well... Michelle sure thinks so... I think she wants a sleepover.

LAURA JUNE
And you’re okay with that--even with all your rehearsals?

SERENA
Yeah! It’ll be totally fun! I can just drop her at school before I go to the studio. Plus... I’ve just felt so bad because I haven’t a lot of time with you two lately... And nothing’s-
SERENA AND LAURA JUNE
More important than family.

SERENA
Plus you and Rick need a date
night, don’t you?

Laura June giggles.

LAURA JUNE
Yes, we do... So that’s fine by me.

Laura June runs inside to give Michelle a hug and kiss.

Serena wanders back to the living room as well.

LAURA JUNE (CONT’D)
But you behave yourself little
missy!

MICHELLE
I promise!

LAURA JUNE
(to Serena)
So I’ll see you Monday for the
show?

MICHELLE
How’d you know?!

LAURA JUNE
Well, Auntie Serena had to ask me
before she could invite you, silly!

Laura June ruffles Michelle’s hair.

SERENA
I actually have a question for you
about Monday... The producers want
you to sing during my Waltz. They
think it’ll be viral and
spontaneous and ratings dynamite...
You know, all those buzz words.

Michelle’s eyes gloss over.

MICHELLE
No. Way. Mom and Auntie Serena on
Dancing with the Stars the same
night! Do it, momma, do it!!
LAURA JUNE
I don’t know... I’m not exactly mainstream...

SERENA
I know... You’re indie. That’s what I told them. But they said you could do any waltzie song you want. You can say no... I’d understand. That’s why I wanted to ask you, so you didn’t feel pressured.

Laura June shakes her head madly.

LAURA JUNE
Why not?!! It’s for my big sis.

SERENA
Really?

Laura June nods enthusiastically.

SERENA (CONT’D)
Cool! Thanks, Lo Jo!

The two hug.

Then, Laura June gives Michelle one more kiss.

LAURA JUNE
You two girls have fun!

SERENA
Oh, you know us-

MICHELLE
We will!

Laura June runs to the door and waves one last time before exiting.

MICHELLE (CONT’D)
Now back to work!

INT. SERENA BELL’S KITCHEN - MORNING

The variety section is left on Serena’s counter top, with a headline cut off at the middle: “Christopher Savance the Latest to”.

Still dressed in pajamas, Serena sits writing out lyrics on her napkin next to her glass of orange juice.
“How you left me torn / worn / forlorn, shattered / tattered”
“I just want to be celebrated / and you just want to be celebrated”

Michelle comes dashing into the kitchen.

    MICHELLE
    Morning!

Serena is startled.

    SERENA
    Woah! What are you doing up so early?

    MICHELLE
    I wanted to do some music before we go... It’s a sleepover-
    (sung)
    -tradition!

    SERENA
    Okay, sure. We have a little time.

Serena gets up and starts to leave the kitchen.

Michelle follows.

    SERENA (CONT’D)
    So I was thinking about a family song, actually.

INT. SERENA BELL’S HOME – CONTINUOUS

Serena and Michelle wander through the living room.

    MICHELLE
    Ooh... Do you have any words?

    SERENA
    (sung)
    The Family Tree, my grandmother, how she-

Serena and Michelle make a turn in the hallway.

INT. SERENA BELL’S MUSIC ROOM – CONTINUOUS

The room is filled with colorful and sparkling instruments, perfectly customized for a musical child’s fantasy.
Serena goes to sit at the piano and Michelle sits right next to her.

SERENA
(sung)
-how she always shone in that
spotlight, and shone on me how to
bring light.

Serena strums a few notes on the piano, but then stops.

SERENA (CONT’D)
I don’t know, just a song of
gratitude I’m trying to string
together...

MICHELLE
Well, I like it. But what about the
part about me?

Serena pounds all of the chords on the piano.

SERENA
I’m getting to it... But I thought
you could help me out a bit.

MICHELLE
Ooh, I can do that!

Michelle scoots over, forcing Serena to move.

Michelle plays contrasting chords.

SERENA

Serena accompanies her.

The two jam together on the piano and goof around, riffing some notes.

SERENA (CONT’D)
Hold on, I like what you did there.
Do it again.

Michelle repeats the scale.

SERENA (CONT’D)
(sung)
My niece, she brings me... peace.

Michelle laughs.
MICHELLE
No, that’s kinda’ awful.

SERENA
Ouch. Okay then... How about I work on it and get back to you?

MICHELLE
Ugh, fine.

SERENA
Or you could help me out too, you know.

MICHELLE
I could... But lyrics are hard... and I wanna’ to hear what you say about me!

SERENA
Well, I say you are sweet... and inquisitive... You know how to shake it... You are energetic... And you always put me in a good mood... a good place. How’s that?

MICHELLE
Yeah... Now put it to music, k?

SERENA
K.

INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS STUDIO - DAY

Serena and Tristan work on their waltz, with which Serena is having a graceful time.

There is a knock on the door, before Dana enters.

TRISTAN
Dana Dereks?

SERENA
Yeah. Tristan, I told you that I had an interview today during lunch.

TRISTAN
But with her?

DANA
There’s a lot more to this than you might think...

(MORE)
DANA (CONT'D)
Now, before I take Serena away from you, I have a couple of questions for you, Tristan... if you don’t mind.

Tristan gives a questionable look to Serena as Dana pulls out her recorder.

TRISTAN
I don’t know if that’s best...

SERENA
Tristan, it’s very kind of you to care so much, but please just do it and be totally honest, okay?

TRISTAN
If you say so...

Dana turns the recorder on.

DANA
How would you say that Serena has been as a partner?

TRISTAN
Far and away, Serena gives me more than I could have ever expected or wanted. With her extreme commitment to things, she genuinely inspires me to be a better performer--and all around, human being--myself. That’s the perfect partner... She’s the perfect partner.

DANA
In your professional opinion, then, Serena has the grit to make it through to the end?

Dana smiles at Serena.

Tristan takes a moment and gives a long, determined look at Serena.

TRISTAN
I would say... yes...
(beat)
Now, don’t get me wrong, Serena’s more than capable of the strongest performance and work ethic, but to hold up at this caliber for eight more weeks has shown to take a physical toll...
(MORE)
And the psychological impact is also a variable. So... While I am optimistic, this competition is known to push people to—or even past—their breaking points.

Dana turns off the recorder.

DANA
Wonderful. Thank you, Tristan. This means the only person left to interview is you, Serena.

SERENA
It’s crunch time, so is it alright to just stay here?

DANA
Yes. Now—

TRISTAN
So I’ll see you in an hour then, Serena?

SERENA
Mhm.

Tristan leaves and Dana turns the recorder back on.

DANA
Your first performance on “Dancing with the Stars” was stripped and bare, but what gave it the most impact was being set to your song, “Travails.” It had a resonance with you and your career thus far. What led to that?

SERENA
Yeah, I really wanted to show everyone my dedication to what I can do—and what I can be as an artist. It’s a form of connection because we all go through something in life... And it’s my way to show you that I care. So... just my story and how I try to continually inspire... And I couldn’t have done it without Tristan bringing it all together with his incredible choreography.
INT. FAME MAGAZINE OFFICE SPACE - DAY

Dana analyzes the proofs of the five-page spread of Serena’s.

The piece is written in elegant font and has one full page devoted to a large image of Serena from the first “Dancing with the Stars” routine. She is collapsed on the floor.

The introduction to the piece reads in emboldened text: “She wants to be celebrated, but don’t go calling Serena Bell a celebrity. She prefers entertainer--and for all the right reasons.”

At the end of the piece, there are family portraits with Serena, Laura June, and Michelle. In between the piece, there are various images of Serena’s career, including a lone picture of Serena and Christopher.

Dana’s inbox notifies her of a new e-mail.

She looks up from the proofs, and sees that it is a response from the New York Times.

“Dear Ms. Dereks,

We appreciate your prompt and poignant piece. Unfortunately, without sufficient evidence nor analysis of any other entertainment figures aside from that of Serena Bell, it is unsuitable to extrapolate upon such claims.

Additionally, given your previous history with Ms. Bell, it would be unwise for us to associate with what could be interpreted as an article strewn with ad hominem attacks.

In essence, your work is not deemed to be appropriate for the New York Times at this point in time.

Once again, thank you for your submission and all the best in your future writing endeavors.

–The New York Times”

Dana remains still.

Then, she opens a document on her computer titled “FULL Serena Bell Story.”

Dana prints out the document, then gets up from her desk with the proofs and the newly printed pages in hand.

She walks into Frank’s opened office.
INT. FRANK’S OFFICE – CONTINUOUS

Dana enters and puts the spread on Frank’s desk, keeping the other pages in hand.

DANA
Frank, this piece is all a suitable mend to the situation, sure.

Frank looks up at Dana.

FRANK
But you’re unsatisfied...

DANA
It reads as a puff piece. And that might work to give Serena appeal again, but it lacks the most crucial aspect of her history.

FRANK
Dereks, you need to drop it. You’ve done what you promised to do, and it’s set for print tonight. These are the final proofs.

DANA
But Serena gave me personal confirmation she wanted a comprehensive view of not just her career, but her life-

FRANK
The number one journalistic principle is do no harm. You and I both know this would destroy the one meaningful relationship that Serena still has.

DANA
It would also clear my name, Frank...

Dana puts the pages down on his desk, before turning to leave the office.

INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS BALLROOM – NIGHT

Serena’s video package is on the screens, playing the ending portion.
INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS PRACTICE ROOM - EVENING

Tristan and Serena practice the Waltz.

    SERENA (V.O)
    With my FAME article coming out this week... Maybe people will just continue to see me as a blonde bombshell or a dumb blonde... Or a dumb blonde bombshell. But maybe... what I’m hoping for more and more is less how people see me and more how I can affect others to be the people they want to be.

In practice, Serena ends the waltz in a mid-air split with Tristan holding her. He puts her down.

    TRISTAN (V.O.)
    From her fall came a rise.

He gives her a high-five and the two smile triumphantly.

INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS BALLROOM - NIGHT

Serena is draped in a peach gown with a crown. She stands atop the platform. Meanwhile, Tristan, dressed in a royal blue suit, is down below.

Laura June stands at the forefront of the action, dressed in a forest green dress.

Meanwhile, Michelle, as excited as she possibly could be, and her father, RICK (30), sit on the sidelines.

    VOICE (V.O.)
    Dancing the Waltz, Serena Bell and her partner, Tristan MacManus, featuring Laura June Bell.

As the music starts the lights go dark except for a dim light on Serena and the musicians.

Serena twirls about the high platform.

Another dim spotlight is placed upon Tristan, who rushes up the staircase only to be stop himself halfway as though he were restrained.

Serena sees him and the lights turn up slightly. She turns away and the lights fade.
Tristan then sees her and the lights rise again. However, he
turns away and they fade once more.

The two then see one another and the whole room lights up.

Serena quickly descends the stairs and grabs hold of Tristan.

Once they reach the bottom flight, they move in sync with one
another, executing numerous twists, exchanges, and passes in
time with the music.

At the final round-about, Serena performs a spin and hits her
neck harshly on Tristan’s elbow.

She falls to the floor clearly in pain as the couple has now
definitively missed several counts of the dance.

Tristan leans down to see if she is okay, but Serena gives a
glance to let him know they must end the routine well.

    TRISTAN
    (discreetly)
    The final lift?

Serena attempts to nod, but a jolt of pain rushes through and
she is stiff.

The music ends right before Tristan grabs her and lifts her
up as she performs the mid-air split that had been seen in
the rehearsal package.

The ballroom is silent--longer than it should be--before the
audience gives questionable applause.

Serena grabs hold of her neck after Tristan transitions to
carry her over to Tom.

    TOM
    Is everything alright, Serena?

    SERENA
    Dancer’s whiplash... I think... I
    hope...

She rubs her neck as she looks at Tristan with fright.

    TOM
    We’ll get that checked out as soon
    as we’re done here, okay?

Serena gives a painful smile.

    SERENA
    Okay.
All three judges are clearly distraught.

TOM
Bruno, you start.

BRUNO
Serena, my darling, I’m so sorry that it all fell apart after that last pass. The rest was so beautiful, but the mistake was so blatant that I have to deduct. You know that. You do.

SERENA
(quietly)
I do.

Bruno looks down sadly as the audience boos.

TOM
Carrie Ann.

Carrie Ann gets up out of her seat and gestures for Serena to come to her.

CARRIE ANN
Are you able to come here?

TRISTAN
I’ll carry her over.

Tristan does so. He gently places her down so that Carrie Ann and Serena can carefully share a hug. As she receives the hug, Serena starts crying.

Afterwards, Tristan lifts Serena up once more and Serena tries to compose herself, wiping the tears away.

CARRIE ANN
Unfortunately, Bruno is correct in what he said. This is one of those moments as a judge where I hope the viewers recognize just how intricate the rest of the routine was... because, unfortunately, I have to score based upon what I saw...

The audience boos.

CARRIE ANN (CONT’D)
But I look forward to next week when you come back and I know you’ll wow us again!
Carrie Ann’s statement garners some applause.

TOM
Len.

Len purses his lips.

LEN
Well, Tom, what can I say that these two haven’t already? There were a few technical things that were lacking, such as not quite enough arch in your back and a few instances without proper foot placement... But it was quite fine until that ending bit.

The audience boos.

LEN (CONT’D)
(to the audience)
Oh, shut up! I don’t lie, people! I’m nothing but honest about what I see!

TOM
How about we just go straight to getting your scores so we can get that checked out, alright, Serena?

SERENA
Okay.

VOICE (V.O.)
Will the judges please reveal their scores?
(beat)
Carrie Ann Inaba.

Carrie Ann takes out her “6” paddle.

CARRIE ANN
Six.

The crowd boos and Carrie Ann shrugs.

CARRIE ANN (CONT’D)
Sorry.

VOICE (V.O.)
Len Goodman.

Len reveals his “6” paddle.
LEN

Six.

The audience’s moans amplify.

VOICE (V.O.)
Bruno Tonioli.

Bruno pulls out his “7” paddle.

BRUNO

Seven.

The audience boos less so at Bruno as Serena looks down at the floor.

SERENA
(faintly)
I promised no more crying until the results show... But I failed at that one.

Tristan gives her a squeeze.

INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS BALLROOM – NIGHT

Serena and Tristan stand under a red light as well as HECTOR MYTHIAS (35) and KYM JOHNSON (40).

Serena looks noticeably better: her head is turned as she whispers with Tristan.

ERIN
While not necessarily in the bottom two, one of you had the lowest combined total of viewer votes and judges’ scores and will be eliminated right now.

TOM
Serena, you had a neck injury last night that has been ruled by doctors not to impair any future routines. However, it gave you the lowest score of the second week after you had the most successful first week of competition in the history of the show. Did viewers vote so that you could have unmatched success again?
ERIN
Hector, you had the opposite occur: you drastically improved from the lowest scores of week one to the highest scores of week two. The judges appreciated the effort. Len even went so far to say that he could see you rule the metaphorical cockfight of the season. Does the audience want to see that fight?

TOM
Serena and Tristan, Hector and Kym, on this second week of competition, the couple with the lowest overall combined total and therefore leaving right now is...

The lights dim and the elimination music creeps overhead.

TOM (CONT’D)
Serena and Tristan.

The ballroom is stunned as Serena instantaneously receives a standing ovation.

Hector and Kym surround Serena and Tristan and give them hugs as Erin attempts to cue them down.

ERIN
Come on down, you two.

TOM
Now, Len, that was a result many people didn’t see coming...

Tom raises his hand and mouths “I didn’t.”

TOM (CONT’D)
For me, it’s a flashback just as shocking as Sabrina Bryan’s elimination back in season five, if not more so... Would you agree?

Len shakes his head.

LEN
Exactly, Tom. It’s so sad that this is the first couple eliminated this season. In all of our seasons, this would be the time when I wish we had a judges’ save.
ERIN
Yes... Well... it’s too bad we
don’t have that option... Which
makes it further proof of what
happens when you don’t vote!

TOM
On the positive side, look at the
testament to the impact you’ve had,
Serena... Even though you’ve only
been with us a short while...
There’s never been such a standing
ovation at the end of the first
elimination...

ERIN
Serena and Tristan, did you
accomplish what you wanted?

Serena is clearly distraught as she tries to suppress the
tears.

SERENA
I just want to say... that this
ended up being so much more to me
than anything. It gave me some self-
worth again... Thank you,
Tristan... I was in the dark for so
long and you helped me try to
escape that...

Serena cannot speak anymore as she is overcome with tears.
She collapses her head onto Tristan’s shoulder, as far away
from the cameras as possible.

TOM
Anything that you have to say to
Serena, Tristan?

TRISTAN
Just that this lady here is
remarkable...

Tristan lifts Serena up from his shoulders to look her in the
eyes.

TRISTAN (CONT’D)
Hey, and you showed me not just how
to escape darkness, but how to
bring about light.

Erin puts her hand over her heart in response to what Tristan
said.
TOM
            Sorry to cut it short, but it’s that time, you two. Take center stage for your last dance.

Tristan hastily moves into the microphone’s range.

TRISTAN
            It’s only the last dance for now.

ERIN
            A smart point to make. We’ll see you again, Serena and Tristan...

Erin’s voice fades in the background as Serena and Tristan move to the middle of the ballroom.

Tristan wraps Serena in his arms as the two slow-step back and forth until the other couples come down to give consolation to the pair.

Though Michelle, who is also crying, is initially underneath Laura June’s arms in the audience, Michelle bursts forward.

She hugs Serena’s leg to get her attention.

Serena leaves the group huddle and takes Michelle in her arms.

Michelle can be seen whispering something into Serena’s ear, which causes Serena to have a feint smile on her face for the first time since the fall the night before.

INT. GOOD MORNING AMERICA SET - MORNING

Serena and Tristan sit at the Good Morning America table across from ROBIN ROBERTS (55).

Serena is dressed similar to her performance on the summer concert series, in a black tank top and skirt.

While far from grotesque in appearance, the slightly smeared black eyeliner and frazzled hair make it evident that Serena is still not fully recovered from the previous night.

SERENA
            I won’t ever forget this.... At the end, Michelle--my niece--came over to me and whispered into my ear... that... I was still the best, if not even better than ever...

Serena starts laughing to herself.
SERENA (CONT’D)
And that now... it’s
(speaked as Michelle)
the worst show EVER!

Serena looks to Tristan and places her hand on his shoulder.

SERENA (CONT’D)
Sorry, Tristan. I think you lost a fan.

TRISTAN
Hey, look, I understand. I think it’s the worst show ever now too!

The threesome laughs together.

SERENA
But, seriously, that is something that I’ll remember forever. It shifted everything in an instant last night...

ROBIN
Still, I’m surprised, even with the low scores of week two, combined with week one, you would think that you could have survived this one--especially since you are arguably the biggest star the show has ever seen!

SERENA
Yes, well, I think that public perception of me has been a bit down-

TRISTAN
The biggest factor was that the competition this week--especially for week two in the season--really stepped up its game. I think this season will likely be the best one just because everyone was trying to play catch-up with this one here.

Serena smiles self-consciously at Tristan.

SERENA
Tristan...
TRISTAN
Serena, I’m sad that this is ending so abruptly for you, but I promise you that I’m going to give you everything for the finale we still have-

ROBIN
And I’m sure there will be an incredible amount of hype for that, I imagine. Especially since you have a special announcement right now, don’t you, Serena?

SERENA
That’s right, Robin. Because of all the attention this gained overnight... My new single, “Influence,” was pushed up for release right after this interview.

ROBIN
That! And your new FAME cover arrived on stands today...

Robin pulls out the issue, which bears the title, “Serena’s Ascent to be Celebrated,” sprawled out underneath the FAME logo.

The image is of a fierce-eyed Serena in a golden outfit holding a dance pose: arms out with golden confetti raining all around her.

ROBIN (CONT’D)
I don’t know if you’ve even seen it yet given your busy schedule the last two days-

SERENA
I haven’t because I had to get here before the stands opened today!

ROBIN
Then let me tell you, this FAME piece... It’s such an insight into not just your life, but the life of “celebrity.” I love that distinction between you the person versus you the celebrity. You’re not about the latter at all, are you?
SERENA
Ugh, no. Definitely not. But if that point came across, I truly have Dana Dereks to thank for that. She put everything into this piece-

ROBIN
That’s nice to see because it settles any feud the two of you had. Plus, I know this has been crafted to leave us wanting more in your upcoming interview with her-

Tristan leans forward and his comment usurps Serena’s.

SERENA
That’s been shifted to be a mini-interview on the finale of “Dancing with the Stars” now actually...

TRISTAN
How could you not want more of her?

Robin laughs.

ROBIN
How did you not fall in love with this one, Serena?

Serena looks at Tristan compassionately.

SERENA
In short: he’s married... But I did still fall in love with him...

Serena realizes what she said.

SERENA (CONT’D)
Just not in that way!

Laughter overtakes the room.

ROBIN
To shift tone, can you answer just one question that’s been lingering with me in all of this-

Robin holds up the FAME magazine.

ROBIN (CONT’D)
-before you go?

SERENA
As long as it’s just one... I don’t want to spoil my Dancing interview!
ROBIN
We sure don’t want that... I’m just so shocked--as will be readers. How did you get past the betrayal?

Any joy that was arising has been squelched as Serena is now stricken with fear.

SERENA
What... betrayal?

ROBIN
That’s right, you haven’t read it yet. Your sister, Laura June. How did you move past her faking as your manager, which set up your photo scandal?

Serena has a sharp pain pierce through her, to which she physically reacts.

Tristan leans in to stop her from possibly falling out of her seat.

TRISTAN
Are you okay, Serena?

Serena recovers from the pain, but her countenance has changed completely.

SERENA
I... I didn’t know.

INT. LAURA JUNE’S HOME - AFTERNOON

Laura June’s home is a touch of country, with brown tones and wooden floors, reminiscent of a barn.

The entryway is covered with photos of outdoor activities: horseback riding, skiing, hiking. Most featured in the photos are Laura June, Michelle, and Rick. However, Serena is in some photos with Laura June and Michelle.

Laura June and Serena stand right at the doorway. Serena leans against the door for a quick escape.

Both sisters are in the midst of emotional turmoil.

SERENA
No, Laura June, I just... I can’t even come up with the words... I would never think... My own sister... You.
Laura June attempts to reach out to Serena, but Serena opens the door and moves outside.

Her hairs blows wildly in the wind.

SERENA (CONT’D)
No... You can’t just... I’m not going to just get over this...
You... ruined me.

Laura June backs away.

LAURA JUNE
Serena, you were... killing yourself. And no one was... You weren’t listening. I needed to scare you... so I did.

SERENA
And then what, were you going to leak the photos too?

LAURA JUNE
No, Serena, I was trying to save you. I was going to buy those photos and show you just how much you needed help. But then-

SERENA
I got them.

LAURA JUNE
You... what?

SERENA
I bought the photos and leaked them.

LAURA JUNE
Why would y... How could you... Then why are you mad at me?!

SERENA
Because you set it all up to begin with... And everything comes out these days and it was better if I had the power to leak them... I needed a way out.

LAURA JUNE
Serena... I just wanted you to be better. I was losing my older sister. I was losing my best friend. And you wouldn’t listen-
SERENA
And you’re sure that you weren’t so jealous of my career that you-

Laura June grabs the door and is about to slam it in Serena’s face before she restrains herself from doing so.

LAURA JUNE

SERENA
You think I don’t want love?

LAURA JUNE
That’s not what I-

Serena charges back into the house.

SERENA
Laura June, I have chosen many things in life... And yes, I wanted to leave a lasting impact on people with music... Fame came with that. But don’t you dare think I don’t want love. I’ve given myself so many times to others... But no one’s ever... ever... loved me back... And the one person who I thought did...

Serena turns back around and starts walking to her car.

LAURA JUNE
Serena, that’s not true-

Serena stops momentarily to say one final thing to Laura June.

SERENA
Laura June, I just need to... I need time to analyze who I am and discover the people who... who do love me.

EXT. LAURA JUNE’S DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Laura June runs after Serena, who is concurrently getting into her black maserati.
LAURA JUNE

Serena!

By the time that she catches up in the driveway, Serena has already pulled out and is speeding off down the street.

LAURA JUNE (CONT’D)
I do love you, sis...

Due to the wind, Laura June’s front door slams shut behind her.

She crouches down.

Rick opens the door and comes out.

RICK
Is everything okay, Lo Jo?

Laura June walks to Rick.

LAURA JUNE
Rick... I think I just lost my sister.

Rick gives Laura June a tight embrace.

INT. FAME MAGAZINE CONFERENCE ROOM – AFTERNOON

Dana sits next to Frank alongside ten EXECUTIVES of FAME Magazine. MARVIN WALLACE (55), CEO of the company, stands at the front of the room.

MARVIN
Miss Dereks’ piece was very well-written. A comprehensive view. And it was the highest selling issue of the last two and a half years. We haven’t had this upturn in numbers since...

FRANK
(whispered)
You did what you promised, Dereks. Job well done.

Dana mouths a “thank you” to Frank, then directs her attention back to Marvin.
MARVIN
Unfortunately, Miss Dereks, you did such a good job re-acquainting Serena Bell to the public that they had overwhelmingly negative feedback about her second GMA appearance.

Marvin picks up a container of letters.

MARVIN (CONT’D)
All of these in some way or another state how inappropriate it was for her to be blind-sided... Not once, but twice. Both times by you. Both times by FAME.

DANA
But... Mr. Wallace..

Marvin looks perturbed by the interruption.

DANA (CONT’D)
May I please have the floor briefly?

MARVIN
You may.

DANA
I understood the ramifications the first time. As such, I took the necessary precautions this time. I gave final say of my two pieces to Frank.

Marvin turns his gaze to Frank.

MARVIN
Is this true, Mr. Bergman?

FRANK
It is. But I-

MARVIN
So the responsibility for not informing Bell’s team of the final decision rests upon?

Dana sees that Frank is about to speak.

DANA
It was my responsibility, Mr. Wallace.

(MORE)
I had told Douglas McMahon—Serena’s manager—that the original proofs I submitted were the finalized version—

MARVIN
So then you understand that—

DANA
Pardon my interruption, but with this story, and I am eternally grateful to Frank for this, I cleared my name from the original photo scandal—

MARVIN
Only to have you vilified for this—

DANA
Again, so sorry. But Mr. Wallace, surely you understand that this is just a miscommunication that hasn’t tarnished Serena Bell’s reputation. It will pass. The controversy surrounding those pictures haunted her... In my estimation, it still haunts her.

MARVIN
Are you finished?

DANA
Yes, sir.

MARVIN
In that case, Ms. Dereks, I am sorry, but the board has voted. We are grateful for your service, but you are—

Dana cringes.

MARVIN (CONT’D)
Fired.

DANA
I resign.

DANA (CONT’D)
Please... let me resign so that I may at least have some shard of dignity left. I’ve given everything for this job... Please let me salvage my reputation in this small way.
MARVIN
As you will, Miss Dereks. I expect your resignation letter on Mr. Bergman’s desk and for you and your belongings to be removed from the premises by end of day.

DANA
Thank... you... Thank you.

Dana gets up from her seat, pushes it in, and, as best as she possibly can, maintains her composure while she leaves the conference room.

Frank sits there, stunned by what Dana just did.

INT. SERENA BELL’S CAR – AFTERNOON

Serena drives speedily and has her music blaring. She haphazardly takes out her cellphone when she hears it vibrate.

She sees messages from Dana Dereks that read: “Lost my job.”
“Fortunately, your interview’s on the show.”
“So Tom and Erin can cover it...”
“Still, I am very sorry to have let you down.”

Serena hits her steering wheel, but then types: “You”

She vacillates between words before ultimately settling on “didn’t.”

Serena sends the message, followed by “It’s not your fault for what happened.”

She starts getting misty eyed.

“Did I cost you your job?”

There is no immediate response.

As such, Serena searches through her contacts.

She taps on the steering wheel while thinking out loud.

SERENA
Party... Hardy... Stacey.

Serena scrolls through again and cannot find the number.
SERENA (CONT’D)

Shit!

She throws the phone down in the seat next to her, but then tries to remember the phone number.

Serena clasps the phone and starts typing while saying the number aloud.

SERENA (CONT’D)

310...279...No, 4. 310-
274...8...6...39.

She composes the message: “Are you still selling?”

Serena hesitates, but sends the message.

She tosses the phone down in the seat once again, before breaking down.

INT. LAURA JUNE’S HOME – DAY

In the middle of the living room, there is a large family portrait of Michelle, Laura June, and Rick.

There are bookshelves that contain many books about outdoor activities.

Flowers and beautiful stones decorate tables of the room.

Michelle and Laura June sit at a kid’s table in the living room, which is colored in varying grays.

Michelle and Laura June play tea party. Michelle wears a pink dress and Laura June has on a tiara.

LAURA JUNE
May I have some more tea please, Ms. Michelle?

MICHELLE
You may.

Michelle takes her teapot and pours imaginary tea into Laura June’s cup.

Laura June takes a sip.

LAURA JUNE
Mmm... Delicious! So good in fact that I may appoint you to be the next in line to marry my son.
MICHELLE
That would be terrific. But, may I ask a question, Your Majesty?

LAURA JUNE
For such a fine tea maker, but of course.

A beat.

MICHELLE
Why don’t I see my Auntie Serena anymore?

Laura June sets her cup down and takes off the tiara.

LAURA JUNE
I... did something to upset her. I was trying to protect her, but it hurt her beyond what I could ever fathom... And I hid it from her too.

MICHELLE
What’s that mean?

LAURA JUNE
I thought doing the wrong thing might have helped her... But it didn’t, Michelle... It doesn’t.

MICHELLE
No, I mean “fathom.” What’s that mean?

LAURA JUNE
Oh... More than I could imagine...

MICHELLE
So why don’t you just try harder?

LAURA JUNE
Because... I am respecting her wishes to be alone right now, Michelle...

MICHELLE
But sometimes, don’t people want the opposite of what they say? That’s silly... People like others taking care of them.
INT. SERENA BELL’S RECORDING STUDIO - EVENING

Serena sits in the recording booth, hands trembling, noticeably dishevelled with hair all about. She looks at many unanswered text messages and phone calls.

Douglas sits on the opposite side of the glass.

She opens some messages from Laura June.

“Serena, will you please respond?”

“Auntie Serena, it’s Michelle... It’s been like a month and I miss you. I love you.”

Serena gives a small smile before typing back, “Just busy finishing work on this album. Hope to see you soon. Love.”

DOUGLAS

Serena, just because you have the best selling magazine of the year doesn’t mean you’re back in the graces of the American public quite yet. “Influence” only charted mildly... so if we don’t get this album finished in time for next month’s release date-

SERENA

What does it matter, anyways, Douglas? All the songs I wanted got cut... I can’t say anything personal for fear of being dropped by my own label.

Richard enters the studio.

DOUGLAS

You’re over on production hours as of today, Serena. You need to get-

RICHARD

That’s actually what I’m here about...

Serena glances up, but does nothing else.

RICHARD (CONT’D)

As of today, your recording for your new album is finished. Your contractual obligation has been fulfilled.
DOUGLAS
What? No, Richard... You can’t do this.

RICHARD
Sure I can. Read the papers.

Richard hands Douglas the legal documents, which Douglas immediately starts reading.

RICHARD (CONT’D)
Even with her stunt casting on “Dancing with the Stars,” her greatest hits album and the two singles have severely underperformed. She hasn’t met the bottom line.

DOUGLAS
So... what happens to the rest of this project?

RICHARD
We’ll release what we have recorded, which is about half the album... To fill, we’ll add previously unreleased demos... Of course, I’ll make sure to have them remastered and mixed... But keep in mind, after that, we’re done.

Douglas stands flabbergasted.

DOUGLAS
Serena, don’t you have anything to say?

SERENA
No.

DOUGLAS
Richard, between you and me, I think you’re making a mistake. She’s gained millions of followers on Twitter in the last month... With a polished album, she’ll be back in the public eye and there to stay.

RICHARD
That’s the problem, Douglas. All Serena is nowadays is famous for being famous. You can’t say otherwise.

(MORE)
RICHARD (CONT'D)
People will pick up a story about her, sure, but “Influence” didn’t sell nearly the amount of followers she’s gained. No one cares about her career anymore, just about her.

DOUGLAS
Can’t we use that momentum for a different push on this album. How often does the general public care--I mean, actually care--about anyone anymore? Normally, they criticize, mock, ridicule... But care? That says something there.

RICHARD
And you know what, I was willing to play along too... Until she used her whole budget. She’s been in this studio for almost two months now and recorded six-and-a-half songs, two of which are half-baked. In no way does the commitment she’s showing me justify investing more money into a career that’s obviously over. She’s done herself. Just look at her.

The two look at a checked out Serena Bell.

DOUGLAS
But--

RICHARD
She’s not even fighting me on this, Douglas. If she’s not, you can’t. We’re done. Don’t make me serve the cease and desist letters.

Richard storms out.

DOUGLAS
Serena, you aren’t giving me much in the way of helping you out here...

INT. SERENA BELL’S HOME - LATER

There is a muted knocking at the door.

Serena sits, head hunched over lines of cocaine that are still in tact.
To the right, she has a multitude of words written down: “Destroyed,” “Under,” and “Depths” among them.

The doorbell rings.

Serena trembles, but gets up to answer the door.

She opens the door to see A DELIVERY MAN standing with an envelope, a bouquet of roses, and a CD.

DELIVERY MAN
Serena Bell?

Serena glares.

SERENA
Yes... I am Serena Bell.

DELIVERY MAN
Then these are for you!

The delivery man turns over the items to Serena.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT’D)
Have a lovely evening!

The card is inscribed “Serena.”

Serena takes a smell of the beautiful arrangement and smiles.

SERENA
My favorite... Thank you... You too.

The delivery man smiles and walks away.

Serena closes the door.

She opens the card.

It reads:

“My Beautiful Serena, You are the most loving heart. You’ve loved constantly, fully, and unceasingly. But even the most loving heart can be broken and I’m culpable for that. I need to show you that I love you. This song is the first step to show you my love.”

Serena goes to put the disc into the CD player and hears the opening words accompanied by sparse instrumentation.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
(sung)
You’ve made me want to work.
(MORE)
CHRISTOPHER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You’ve made me want to change. I
hope to finally show you... You can
trust me again... You can love me
again...

Serena goes over to the cocaine, shakes her head, and wipes
it into her hand before going to the bathroom.

A flush can be heard.

Serena returns. She locates her phone.

INT. DANA DEREKS APARTMENT - EVENING

As she looks through photos of William and her in a
scrapbook, Dana’s phone vibrates on her table.

It is a text message from Serena reading “I was dropped from
my label... And I’ve been so down... But I finally know... I
want this, Dana.”

Dana frowns... Until she scrambles for the phone.

“Is this public knowledge yet?”

“No, but it’ll be in a press release in a couple of days...”

“That’s not how it should be...”

“What do you mean?”

“Do you trust me?”

“Yes”

“Then... consider this you getting it.”

“Getting... what?”

“What you deserve”

Dana opens Twitter.

INT. RICHARD’S OFFICE - MORNING

Richard sits at his desk sorting through demo after demo on
his laptop for Christopher Savance.

He pages his assistant.
RICHARD
Christina, when is Christopher back in the studio?

CHRISTINA (V.O.)
Last I heard, he still has another thirty days.

RICHARD
Will we at least get Serena Bell’s album mastered by the end of the month?

CHRISTINA (V.O.)
No... Marquina said the middle of next month.

RICHARD
(to himself)
Drop the bitch to finish the goddamn album early and yet it still ends up taking more time...

CHRISTINA (V.O.)
Dana Dereks is here to see you? But... it’s not in the books.

RICHARD
This isn’t a free-for-all, Christina! Do your job. Send her away.

DANA (V.O.)
Trust me, Richard, that isn’t what you want. At all.

Just seconds later, there is knocking at the door.

He presses the intercom.

RICHARD
Christina, get security.

Dana bursts into the room.

DANA
You have security escort me out and I’ll make sure that this label’s treatment of Serena Bell goes public.

Richard stands up.
RICHARD
Dropping an artist isn’t even-

TWO SECURITY GUARDS come rushing in as Richard finally recognizes her.

They start to escort Dana out of the room.

RICHARD (CONT’D)
You’re the journalist.

DANA
Yes, I am.

RICHARD
What more do you think you have?

DANA
I essentially wrote her life story, Richard.

RICHARD
Let her go.

The security guards drop Dana, but remain in place, alert.

DANA
Would you mind?

Richard waves them off.

RICHARD
Go...

(to Dana)
I don’t think anything you have could possibly be that interesting... or damning.

DANA
Oh really? I didn’t mention that because of a technicality in her contract, her last label made her go out for that Broadway show. That clearly contributed to derailing her.

Richard laughs and sits back down in his seat.

RICHARD
That has nothing to do with my label-
DANA
But it does have to do with the industry and how label heads like you manipulate and abuse your artists.

RICHARD
It’s business.

DANA
She wanted to record music again right after she was better. You swooped in to sign her, but not only did you wait until the last possible moment that bound you to produce an album, you also made sure to strip her of any creative license on said album.

RICHARD
Profitability.

DANA
You trapped her into doing nothing for five years.

RICHARD
There were no songs produced that fit her brand. Until now.

DANA
Then, you gave her a microscopic budget.

RICHARD
You’re reaching. Leave. Now.

DANA
Fine, but this is only a preview of things to come.

Dana pulls open her Twitter feed and sets it on Richard’s desk.

Tweets such as “How could @RichardMichaels make such a #shitdecision” cover the screen. “#shitdecision” is trending at number one on the feed.

DANA (CONT’D)
Look at the hundreds of thousands of retweets. You’re already hated just for dropping her.
RICHARD
How did you-

DANA
Why else would I be here?

RICHARD
This will pass.

DANA
Not if I tell them what I just told you. I’d bet that sales would drop.

RICHARD
Nice try. Fans will still buy what they want to hear. We have the premiere talent in the industry right now.

DANA
But if your promising artists were to see how you mistreated one of their peers... Just imagine productivity... I’ll even give you proof of this. Christopher Savance.

Dana pulls open her text conversation.

Christopher’s responses to her read:

“I was planning on going back in.”

“But after that...”

“I don’t think I’m required to be back in the studio for at least another month...”

“And trust me, I won’t.”

RICHARD
She isn’t coming back to the label, you cu-

Dana takes her phone and starts typing.

RICHARD (CONT’D)

DANA
That’s not what this is about, prick.
Dana hovers her thumb over the “Send” button as she shows Richard the tweet.

**DANA (CONT’D)**
The first of many to come!

**RICHARD**
Don’t!
(beat)
Fine. Then what? What do you want?

Dana lets out a sigh of appreciation for herself.

**DANA**
I really should be a publicist.

Dana opens the photos on her phone and shows them to Richard.

**DANA (CONT’D)**
That’s just the initial concept, of course. Everything’s negotiable.

**RICARD**
Right.

**INT. DANCING WITH THE STARS BALLROOM – NIGHT**
The ballroom floor is lit by the word “Finale.”
Erin and Tom stand in front of the cameras.

**PRODUCTION ASSISTANT**
3, 2-

He gestures and mouths “1” and points to Tom.

**ERIN**
Welcome back to our live finale!

**TOM**
We are currently in the midst of our fallen stars... Before the big reveal of this season’s winner, our last star to perform tonight was actually the first star eliminated this season. How’s that for a doozy?

**ERIN**
Easily the most shocking elimination that our show’s ever seen...

(MORE)
ERIN (CONT'D)
Now, before Serena Bell seizes the ballroom with her world premiere of “Celebrated,” Bell had a few words that she... just couldn’t let go unsaid any longer.

TOM
Now, Serena, come here. We know you wanted to do this live to give it some extra flare.

The lights fade as two spotlights shine on Serena, who wears a platinum coat-dress that shimmers under the light.

Serena gives a jokey, scared face.

SERENA
I don’t know. I’m having second thoughts, Tom. I haven’t had too much luck with interviews lately... But I’m also not wearing black this time-

ERIN
No, you’re wearing platinum!

SERENA
(jokingly)
I know!

TOM
Plus, it’s only a couple of questions. Somehow, I think you’ll manage.

SERENA
Let’s hope!

Serena crosses her fingers.

ERIN
So... Why this song? Why “Celebrated”?

SERENA
Because we are all such incredible people and there is this... misperception of thinking others to be less than worthy of our time or overestimating the importance of others... I’m not better than anyone. Anyone... We are all talented in our own ways...

(MORE)
And to think that famous people are so much better because—why? Society tells us they are... that they’re better looking or more intelligent or talented or valiant? That’s bane. It’s untrue. We’re equal. You and me. You and the world. The world and me. We’re equal.

And you wanted to show people one particular thing, right?

Yes. To have hope. I’ve done my own bad things... And... given into a lot of despair... But I’ve had the best people to remind me that I am good. We just need to search and be open to that in ourselves and, most importantly, to bring that out in others. We deserve that. We deserve to love. To be loved. To be validated. To be cherished... To be... celebrated.

Serena jumps and twirls. Smoke starts to fill the stage accompanied by dazzling light effects.

Serena sees Dana in the audience, seated next to the stage in the ballroom. Serena runs up to her.

Like look at the incredibly brilliant New York Times reporter, Dana Dereks, folks!

Serena gives Dana a huge hug and kiss on the cheek before running up to the top of the platform where Tristan stands. Serena leans into Tristan.

I just want to be celebrated.

Serena sharply pivots and Tristan tears off her coat dress to reveal a golden cha cha dress underneath.

Laura June appears on the opposite platform.
LAURA JUNE
Dance remix.

The beat intensifies as Serena and Tristan spin across the ballroom floor doing various combinations of dance steps: the rumba, samba, salsa, foxtrot, jive, cha cha, quickstep, jazz, and contemporary.

LAURA JUNE (CONT’D)
(sung)
You just want to be celebrated.

After a twenty second twirl at the end of the song, Tristan lets Serena go and she spins into Christopher’s arms.

SERENA AND CHRISTOPHER
(sung)
We are...

Christopher dips Serena to the ground.

Michelle slides out into the splits next to her aunt, complimented by Tristan on the other side.

SERENA, LAURA JUNE, MICHELLE, AND CHRISTOPHER
CELEBRATED!

The audience, already standing and dancing along, cheers with unmatched intensity as an album cover of Serena and Christopher in wedding attire appears on the screens.

The title reads “Celebrated.”