

JUMP!

By

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1 INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

Blue and Black lighting bolt graphics flash across the screen. Drum rolls echo. Cheesy reality TV music beats.

COMMENTATOR V/O

A world first 48 hour dance
competition pairing has-been dance
professionals with amateur
wannabes over the age of 30 to
battle it out for the chance to win
\$1 million dollars! Welcome to...
"So You Think You Can *Still* Dance?"

Lighting bolts crash into each other and explode into fireworks.

CUT TO.

2 INT. MELODY'S BEDROOM - DAY

AUDITION TAPE: MELODY (37) daggy, pretty and joyful - dressed head to toe in 80's dance sets up her home video camera and breaks out her best 80's moves.

MELODY V/O

Hi, I'm Melody. I'm a 37 year old
secretary, from Melbourne,
Victoria.

CUT TO.

3 INT. MELODY'S CHILDHOOD LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

HOME-VIDEO FOOTAGE MONTAGE: Melody (6) dances to 80's music.

MELODY V/O (CONT'D)

My father was a conservative
chiropractor who believed dancing
was an expression of the
devil. When he caught me dancing
he served rather unorthodox
punishments.

DAD (40), broad and burly bursts in, turns the music off and chases Melody out of the room, the camera wobbles.

CUT TO. PHOTOGRAPH: Melody (6) sitting between her parents on the couch - legs bandaged together.

4 INT. SCHOOL DANCE HALL - NIGHT

HOME-VIDEO FOOTAGE: DANCING CHILDREN (11) on stage in bright 80's costumes.

MELODY V/O (CONT'D)

By the age of 11 I'd developed a rare condition called "Stiff Leg Syndrome". At school kids teased me calling me (pause) "stiff legs" - quite appropriately. And after a particularly humiliating moment I stopped dancing in public altogether.

Melody (11) frozen on stage. Kids awkwardly dance around her.

CROWD

(echoes)

Stiff legs! Stiff legs!

FADE TO.

5 INT. MELODY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

MELODY lies in bed paralysed from the waist down, her arms frantically move back and forth as if she's running.

Chirpy alarm clock music plays - a dancing coke can jiggles to the tune. A messy bedroom floor - empty tissue boxes, a note stuck to her mirror: "Don't give up!", and a ransacked closet bursting with 80's costume pieces. On the wall, a cheesy neon poster of an 80's dance icon. On the bedside table, a photo of Melody with her ex boyfriend crossed out.

Melody opens her eyes and sees the time - she jolts upright.

MELODY

Cripes!!!

Melody jumps out of bed half asleep, trips and falls. She yanks a jumper from a pile of clothes in her wardrobe - a man's suit hangs solo from the empty side of her closet.

6 INT. MELODY'S FRONT DOOR - MORNING

Melody (cereal in hand) rushes to her front door, swings it open and jumps when she sees her MUM (65), prim and proper at her door.

MELODY
Aaaaah! Muuum!!

MUM
Sorry to startle you dear.

Her mum tries to push past her, Melody blocks the door.

MELODY
Mum, I'm late!

Melody yanks at her keys in the lock.

MUM
I just thought you might consider changing your mind dear. And, well you know my good friend Joy - from book club, well she has a strapping young son around your age - good job, sensible kind man, just like his mother and well, we thought...

Mum whips out a cheesy family photo of GEORGE and GEORGE'S MUM. Melody pushes it away.

MELODY
No mum! Come on! I don't need a man. I'm doing this for me and nothing you say can stop me!

She pushes past her mum who scurries behind her.

7 EXT. MELODY'S DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS - MORNING

MUM
But can't you do something a bit - less - "out there"? What if you make a fool of yourself sweetie...

MELODY
What if I don't!? (pause) Mum, this is the first thing I've felt good about since... maybe ever.

MUM
But you're 37 sweetie, you're supposed to be settled down! I don't know why you kicked poor Robert out...

MELODY
He's gay mum.

MUM

Fussy Fussy. No one will ever be good enough.

Melody approaches her car - opens her car door, her mum stands in the way.

MELODY

I have to go. I'm going to be late for my dance partner!

MUM

Just one dinner with George. A dinner can't hurt sweety.

MELODY

Fine! One dinner!

Melody's scarf gets caught in the front door and unravels. Her mum looks at Melody's neck horrified.

MUM

Wait!

Melody slams the door.

8 INT. MELODY'S CAR - MORNING

Melody slumps in her car - the state of a homeless person's rubbish heap. She pushes chocolate bar wrappers aside to access the gears.

9 EXT. STREET - MORNING

Melody burns out of her parking space, screeches around the corner and through a side street.

10 INT. MELODY'S CAR - MORNING

Melody slurps her cereal from the bowl, it looks like she's on the home stretch, but she turns a corner and lands amongst a traffic bank up.

She slams on the breaks, her cereal sloshes back in her face.

MELODY

Nooooo!

She bursts into tears. Car horns toot, road rage echoes around her. She sobs quietly in her car. An 80's track blasts through the speakers. Melody's face lights up, she turns up the music and bops along.

11 EXT. DANCE REHEARSAL STUDIO - MORNING

A large brick building looms. Music pounds from inside.

12 INT. DANCE STUDIO HALLWAY - MORNING

Melody rushes through the dance foyer, bumping into PRETENTIOUS DANCERS as they exit the dance hall pointing and laughing at Melody. PENNY (42) quirky and confident motions at Melody's neck. Melody mimicks slicing her throat.

MELODY

(mimes)

I'm late, I know, I know.

13 INT. DANCE REHEARSAL STUDIO - MORNING

Melody bursts into the dance studio a sweaty mess.

GUNTER (37), perfectly poised and burly with a thick german accent - leers at her.

MELODY

I'm sorry, I'm so sorry, I know
that I sh...

GUNTER

You know that your top is on inside
out, and around the wrong way?

Pretentious dancers giggle from the doorway and slip out of sight.

Melody pulls her top up and sees her tag. She's mortified.

MELODY

Um, no. I did not know that.

Melody stands awkwardly in front of the mirror. Gunter circles her like prey.

GUNTER

Lateness will not be tolerated.

MELODY

Sorry. It's just that my mum came
by and then I got stuck in traffic
and I know it's no excuse, but I...

Gunter glares at her. She stops, shakes her head and extends her hand for a hand shake.

MELODY(CONT'D)

Sorry, I'm Melody Meriwether. It's so nice to meet you, I'm so excited and when I get excited I get all chatty mcchatterbox and I go on...

Gunter extends his hand and pulls a piece of cereal out of her hair.

GUNTER

Gunter Jazhanz.

MELODY

(laughs)

Hey, that's like "jazz hands".

GUNTER

No! Juzhunz.

MELODY

Yeah, but it's sort of like...

GUNTER

No! It's nothing like it.

MELODY

Sorry.

Gunter whips out a measuring tape and measures Melody.

GUNTER

Shoulders back!

MELODY(CONT'D)

So... where are you from?

GUNTER

I grew up in Schlongtaggin, Germany...

Melody shrugs.

GUNTER(CONT'D)

The dance capital!?!... where all the great dancers of our time were born! (pause)- Volhomer Bluschteel?

Melody shifts awkwardly.

MELODY

Aaah...?

GUNTER

Well you must know me from such shows as "Froiline Dunce Punts"...

Melody shakes her head.

GUNTER(CONT'D)

Oh yah, you're an amateur, I guess you wouldn't know anything.

MELODY

Well yeah, sorry, my beginnings are much humbler, I grew up in a...

Gunter snaps the measuring tape back in it's case.

GUNTER

Yah, yah. Ok. We only have 48 hours and counting.

Gunter ticks "Measurements" off his list and dramatically throws his clipboard aside.

GUNTER

We'll start with some basic steps.

Gunter's alarm clock buzzes. He bends in half. Melody can't touch her toes.

FADE TO.

14 INT. DANCE REHEARSAL STUDIO - LATER

Gunter prances with modern dance finesse. Melody struggles to keep up with his moves - she looks like an uncoordinated frog. Gunter stops dancing and glares at her.

GUNTER

What are you doing?!

Melody's legs freeze, she limps the rest of the moves. Gunter smacks his hand on his head.

GUNTER(CONT'D)

Oh wonderful! You're one of those weak fragile types!

Melody rubs her legs awkwardly.

GUNTER(CONT'D)

(mortified)

How did you get into this competition!? Did they mix up your

GUNTER(CONT'D)
 audition tape up with the Funniest
 Home Videos!?

Melody shrugs.

MELODY
 (jokes)
 I got in by the hair of my chinny
 chin chin!

Melody laughs awkwardly. Snorts a little. Gunter is
 straight faced.

MELODY(CONT'D)
 (to self)
 Not a fan of jokes.

GUNTER
 Do you think dancing is a joke?

MELODY
 Um...

GUNTER
 I plan on Winning this competition
 and I will not be ridiculed by a
 charlatan!

Gunter's phone rings. He jumps on it desperately.

GUNTER
 Darling! Yes! It only rang once!
 (whispering) No, she's not pretty -
 at all. Ugly in fact.

Melody pretends not to hear, fixes her hair in the mirror.

GUNTER
 (grovels)
 Yes, no, I won't be late. Promise!

Gunter hangs up the phone, recomposes himself, but there's a
 softness about him now that he can't shake.

MELODY
 This competition is important to me
 too you know.

GUNTER
 Well I can't construct a winning
 dance routine with an uncoordinated
 frog! I'm not a wizard!

Gunter paces melodramatically.

MELODY
I know it doesn't look like it, but
I can dance.

Melody moves toward her bag.

MELODY(CONT'D)
What if we spend some time getting
to know each other?

Melody grabs something from her bag.

GUNTER
Oh yah what a wonderful
idea! Shall we sing a lullaby, put
flowers in our hair and dance like
no one's watching?

Melody hides the flowers and 80's CD behind her back,
smiling innocently. Gunter death stares her.

GUNTER(CONT'D)
We're here to work Melody, not to
be the BFFs.

MELODY
I just thought...

GUNTER
Put your sunshine back in your
pocket.

Melody confused - awkwardly puts air into her pocket.

GUNTER
Now we dance.

CUT TO.

15 INT. DANCE REHEARSAL STUDIO - LATER STILL

DANCE MONTAGE: Modern music plays. Melody gradually
accumulates cuts and bruises. She mimicks Gunter's dancing
like a conscientious dork - just when she looks like she
gets it - her legs stiffen up. Gunter glares.

MELDOY
Pleeease let me try something, I
can dance better than this, I
promise!

GUNTER
Fine! Do it quickly!

Melody switches on 80's dance music and comes to life.
Gunter twitches, jumps in the air and slams on the stop
button.

GUNTER
(screams)
No! No 80's music!!!

MELODY
Why not?! It's not like it's
Michael Bolton or something...

GUNTER
If you're going to dance like a naf
80's spirit child at least get
drunk first so people think you're
normal!

MELODY
But 80's dance is all I know and...

GUNTER
All 80's music is a joke!

MELODY
But...

GUNTER
You know, the judges will change
partners in the case of injury.

Gunter looks at Melody like a villian. Melody winces.

FADE TO.

16 EXT. DANCE STUDIO - DAY TO AFTERNOON

Time lapse of sun setting over the Dance Studio building.

17 INT. DANCE STUDIO - DUSK

Gunter's alarm sounds - the music more urgent.

Melody is trying so hard it looks like she might combust.

Gunter dances frustrated circles around Melody yelling at
the top of his lungs.

GUNTER

3....4...Dance is a technical craft, it's not a game, it is not for "fun", it is discipline, routine, structure! Stand up straight!...no, No, NO! Schizen! What is wrong with you!

MELODY

Please stop yelling!

Melody's legs freeze. Gunter smacks his hand on his head.

GUNTER

If you can't handle the pace, get out of the dance studio!

Gunter points toward the door. Melody tries to move, but her legs won't budge.

MELODY

I don't want to do this if my heart's not in it!

GUNTER

What has your heart go to do with it? One foot in front of the other - that is all you must do!

Melody pulls a flyer out of her bag. It reads: 5 Rhythms - freestyle dance class

MELODY

How about we go to this 5 Rhythms dance class, I hear it's...

Gunter snatches the flyer, screws it up and throws it in the bin.

GUNTER

(scoffs)

We will do no such thing! This is not dancing!

Melody retrieves the flyer and slides it into her pocket.

GUNTER(CONT'D)

You will stay here for 2 hours perfecting the moves. We will meet back here at 7am sharp!

MELODY

(meekly)

Look, we don't have one move in the whole routine that's mine and...

GUNTER

Do you have a problem with my moves?

MELODY

No! But...

Melody's legs freeze.

GUNTER

I have to go - unlike you I have a life.

Gunter saunters out of the room and disappears into the hallway.

Melody cranks an 80's dance track and takes her frustration out on the dance floor. She thrusts her pelvis into the air and breaks out the 80's moves.

18 INT. DANCE REHEARSAL STUDIO HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gunter hears the music, swivels around with an angry huff and marches back toward the studio.

19 INT. DANCE REHEARSAL STUDIO/INTERCUT WITH HALLWAY - NIGHT

Melody's dancing with childlike wonder - and she's good.

As Gunter approaches the doorway he freezes and becomes mesmerised by...

GUNTER POV - SLOW MOTION: Gunter secretly watches Melody's flashdance style moves from the doorway. Gunter's body - possessed by the music - moves to the beat.

REALTIME: Gunter slips and bangs against the door frame. Melody looks up and they hold eye contact for a moment.

GUNTER

(uncontrollable)

Mummy!

MELODY

What?

GUNTER
 Nuthing! I said - funny!... you
 look funny...

Gunter scurries away. Melody runs after him, but he's gone.

Melody's mum appears from around the corner with GEORGE
 (40), mama's boy awkwardly tucking in his shirt.

Melody jumps, glares at mum.

Mum smiles guiltily - pushes George forward.

20

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Melody and George sit across from each other in awkward chit
 chat sipping on water - with absolutely zero chemistry
 between them.

MELODY
 Sounds like our mums spend way too
 much time together - talking about
 us!

GEORGE
 Your mum is always coming to our
 family dinners and they...

MELODY
 Oh gawsh I'm sorry!

GEORGE
 It's okay, your mum's lovely! She
 brings over those...

George's rambling voice fades out. Melody looks away and
 notices Gunter on another table sitting with NANCY (36), a
 corporate wicked witch.

Melody listens in on Gunter and Nancy's heated conversation.

NANCY
 ...But when are you going to get a
 real job!? You do realise that
 when people ask what my boyfriend
 does I have to say you're a
 "dancer" Gunter! Do you know how
 that makes me look? "There goes
 that successful receptionist with
 her loser boyfriend!"

Gunter's bottom lip quivers.

Melody winces, compassionate - turns back to George as his voice fades back in.

GEORGE
 ...and well, this is a bit awkward,
 but the truth is, I kind of fancy
 someone else...

MELODY
 That's great!

GEORGE
 Really?!

MELODY
 Yeah!

GEORGE
 Oh thank god!

MELODY
 Look, that dance class is about to
 start and if I don't leave now...

GEORGE
 Of course!

Melody and George jump up quickly. They handshake/awkward back pat each other goodbye and George rushes away.

Melody slides up to Gunter's table.

NANCY
 When are you going to stop acting
 like a loser and be a real man!?

Gunter cowers.

MELODY
 (feigning surprise)
 Hey! You still coming to the dance
 class-thing?

NANCY
 We're in the middle of a
 conversation!

GUNTER
 (ignoring Nancy)
 Ah Yah, I am.

Nancy folds her arms, stares Gunter down, but he's standing up.

MELODY

Great!

Awkward silence. Gunter winces as Nancy huffs and puffs like a dragon.

MELODY(CONT'D)

Nice to meet you.

Gunter turns on his heel and proudly walks away behind Melody.

21 INT. 5 RHYTHMS HALL - NIGHT

Tribal music bellows. Melody is in awe as she guides Gunter through a crowd of FREE SPIRITED HIPPIES. A sign reads: Dance Now Talk Later.

Gunter squeezes through the crowd trying not to touch the sweaty hippies.

Penny waves at Melody and continues to dance in her own world.

Melody is at home amongst her quirky counterparts - Penny, OLD MAN, GRASSHOPPER, GERMUNJI, FAIRY TOES.

Gunter looks as if he's in a jungle surrounded by tigers.

The music pulsates - Melody connects with her inner dance goddess.

Gunter's ears prick up, his body moves as if possessed.

Melody and Gunter organically move toward each other, they truly connect for the first time and dance in unison like long lost childhood friends.

22 EXT. DANCE REHEARSAL STUDIO STREET - MORNING

Melody bops down the street toward the dance studio proudly donning a bright neon 80's costume.

23 INT. DANCE REHEARSAL STUDIO - MORNING

Melody bursts through the studio door beaming. Gunter's not there.

The clock shows 7am.

Melody bends into warm up stretches.

FADE TO.

The clock shows: 7.45am.

Gunter shimmies in looking like a crow in his sleek black dance costume.

MELODY

Hey! (mocking him) Lateness vill not be tolerated!

Gunter ignores her jovial banter, covers his eyes at the sight of her bright costume and throws a black costume at her.

GUNTER

Okay. Let's go from the top.

MELODY

You were rad last night! I haven't seen you move like that! You were on fire!

GUNTER

I don't know what you're talking about.

Melody mimicks Gunter's 5 Rhythms dance moves. Gunter twitches.

GUNTER(CONT'D)

I would NEVER move like that!

MELODY

(confused)

What? But what about when we were dancing to Cindy Lauper and...

GUNTER

Melody! This is not the time for games! We have less than 10 hours before the competition!

Melody runs over to the stereo and puts on an 80's CD.

GUNTER(CONT'D)

What are you doing!?!
Don't make me injure you so we can change partners!

Gunter grabs the remote control and turns it off.

Melody pulls his hands away and they get into a wrestling match.

MELODY

Look, I think we danced better last night than we did all day yesterday! I think we have a chance at winning if we inject who we really are into this routine.

GUNTER

The *last* thing we need is to inject any part of *you* into this routine!

Gunter snatches the remote back. Melody pushes back hard.

MELODY

Look you've been nothing but mean to me since we started. You act like you're all superior, but guess what!? I'm not falling for your facade! You love 80's music too! I'm just brave enough to admit it!

GUNTER

Brave? Please!? You're a coward! And a frog!

MELODY

Well Ribbit!!! You're just as messed up as I am, you just have your fears so neatly packed away not even YOU can see them! You can't even...

GUNTER

I'm NOT a mess, I'm perfection! You are the one with the stupid jokes and ridiculous dance moves! Life isn't an 80's dance fiesta! This competition is real. Life is tough... and, and, people are mean!

MELODY

(teary)

Well it doesn't have to be that way!

GUNTER

Aw you want me to molly coddle you?

MELODY

No! I just want you to stop taking your shit out on me!

GUNTER

I'm not shit, you're shit! You
weak, pathetic loser, who, who
can't even stand up for
themselves!...

SLOW MOTION: Melody steps back and watches as Gunter bursts into manic rage.

Gunter, though raging like a lunatic - looks like a scared child.

Melody reaches forward.

Gunter winces, thinking Melody is going to hit him.

Melody takes a deep breath...

and hugs Gunter.

For a moment Gunter spasms in her embrace.

GUNTER (CONT'D)

(uncontrollable)

Mummy!

Gunter convulses and pushes Melody away.

GUNTER

Noooo!

SLOW MOTION: Melody falls backwards twisting her leg - a big crack sounds.

Gunter looks down at her guiltily.

24 INT. MELODY'S BEDROOM - DUSK

Melody, bandaged leg raised on pillows, cries like a baby surrounded by dirty tissues.

Mum packs away Melody's 80's costumes.

INSERT: The dance competition heats up on television - contestants scurry backstage.

REALTIME: Melody looks up over her tissue at the TV.

INSERT: On the TV screen Gunter paces backstage - engulfed with fear.

COMMENTATOR V/O
It's been confirmed that Gunter
Jazzhands..

GUNTER
(gasps)
Jazhanz!

COMMENTATOR V/O
...has refused to take on a new
partner in the hope that his
partner Melody will show... and he
seems to be having some sort of
panic attack...

Gunter huffs and puffs - gives the TV screen puppy dog eyes.

REALTIME: Melody throws tissues at the TV and yells over the
commentator.

MELODY
Don't look at me like that! I
can't dance! I have stiff legs!

Melody looks down at her leg - has a moment of revelation.

MELODY(CONT'D)
Correction... I have stiff leg.

Melody laughs to herself. Her mum looks concerned.

Melody jumps out of bed.

25 EXT. MELODY'S CAR - DUSK

80's hero music plays. Melody hobbles toward her car, 80's
backpack slung over her shoulder, a crutch under her arm.

Melody tries to squeeze into the car, but her broken leg
gets caught. She juggles the crutches, heaves and yanks at
her leg. She sighs.

Melody abandons her car and crutches - door wide open -
hitting the pavement limping.

Mum rushes onto the street behind her.

MUM
Melody!

Mum watches Melody run into the distance.

26 EXT. BEACH/STREET - DUSK

SLOW MOTION: Against a cheesy pink 80's sunset Melody runs along the beach toward the city.

27 INT. DANCE COMP HALL BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Gunter pants like a hyena. His face lights up when he sees Melody.

GUNTER
(wheezing)
You came!

Gunter is practically turning blue. Melody smiles, places one hand on his back and holds her other hand over his stomach. Gunter flinches.

MELODY
Take a deep breath in - push your
stomach out for eight breaths and
then back in with my hand...

Gunter shifts uncomfortably, but follows her lead.

GUNTER
I'm sorry! I'm sorrreereey! You
win! I'm a fraud! I'm a has-been!
I'm a weak, pathetic loser!

MELODY
No you're not.

GUNTER
I am, I'm a loser - like my father
always said! My mother couldn't
stop the lashings. (winces) Mummy!

Gunter cries like a baby. Melody rubs her hand on his back.

MELODY
Sounds like you had it rough.

GUNTER
It's okay, it didn't affect me so
much.

MELODY
Obviously.

GUNTER
Maybe a little.

They laugh. Gunter takes a deep breath and relaxes.

Gunter looks at her lovingly.

MELODY

You ready?

Melody reaches out her hand, he takes it and follows her lead. Gunter rips open his black costume to reveal an 80's t-shirt underneath.

28 INT. DANCE COMP HALL STAGE - NIGHT

A dark stage, light drum rolls rumble, whispers ripple through the audience. Conservative judges straighten their ties.

Music builds, the lights come up. Melody and Gunter shimmy onto the stage dressed in outrageous 80's costumes.

An 80's/modern dance music fusion track takes off. The judges roll their eyes.

Melody dances awkwardly with her broken leg. Gunter tries to support her, but he can't connect with her wobbly rhythm.

CROWD

Boo!

Melody lifts her leg, smacks herself in the face and loses balance. Melody's legs freeze. Gunter catches her as she slides to the floor.

The crowd gasp.

Pretentious dancers snigger.

Melody lay on the floor with taunting voices swirling around her.

FLASHBACK: Melody (11) frozen on stage. The audience taunting.

CROWD

Stiff legs, stiff legs!...

REALTIME: Melody looks to the conservative crowd - hands over their mouths.

George walks in. Behind him - her mum. On the other side of her GEORGE'S MUM takes her hand lovingly as they sit down.

MUM

(chanting)

Mel-ody! Mel-ody! Mel-ody!...

One by one the crowd join in.

CROWD
Mel-ody! Mel-ody...

Melody smiles, closes her eyes and her legs stir to life.

As Melody stands, a surge of determination takes over and she executes the rest of the dance with exuberant energy.

Melody and Gunter dance in sync, Melody slips and stumbles a few times, but Gunter catches her and her enthusiasm doesn't falter.

The crowd cheer loudly and one by one they stand and dance in their seats.

Group by group they join Melody and Gunter on the stage and follow their dance moves.

The stage transforms into an 80's style dance party.

Penny hands out Melody's costume pieces.

Pretentious dancers get into the groove.

Melody's mum does the moonwalk toward Melody and hugs her proudly. George's mum and Melody's mum dance like 80's soul sistas.

Gunter lifts Melody in the air mocking a jump. Cameras flash.

FADE TO BLACK.