

INT. ELYSSA'S HOME, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

ELYSSA, 14, petite, long dark hair, dimples, and RAYNIE, 14, tall and chunky, slouch over the couch and watch a cheerleader competition on TV.

NARRATOR

Elyssa and Raynie are cousins who just happen to be best friends. An odd pairing actually, as they are nothing alike.

Raynie wears a headset. Her body keeps time. Elyssa leans forward and cheers.

ELYSSA

Did you see that flip?

NARRATOR

Raynie loves music, video games and basketball. Elyssa, well, Elyssa is all about sports and being popular.

Raynie nods and gives a thumbs up.

ELYSSA

Can you imagine having so many friends?

RAYNIE

One good friend is all I need.

NARRATOR

They are about to embark on a new adventure together, highschool. Raynie will be happy just to make it through her freshman year.

Elyssa and Raynie's MOMS enter.

ELYSSA'S MOM

Sorry girls, school starts tomorrow.

Elyssa's Mom turns off the TV. Raynie rises, waves and exits with her Mom. Elyssa trudges off to bed.

NARRATOR

Elyssa, on the other hand, has been training for this her whole life. Her dream, Head Cheerleader.

MONTAGE - ELYSSA THROUGH THE YEARS

-- Elyssa, 2, tip toes across a balance beam.

-- Elyssa, 8, charges the vault, leaps into the air, her hands hit the vault, triple somersault into a perfect landing.

--Elyssa, A GOLD medal is hung about her neck.

-- Elyssa, 12, grips the uneven bars. She performs a backward giant, a cast handstand into a back hip circle, followed by a Comaneci, and a straddle back. Then comes her dismount, a front flyaway.

--Elyssa, Wins GOLD at the junior Olympics.

END MONTAGE

INT. CARRINGTON'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

CARRINGTON, 16, blonde, slim, pretty, and PILAR, 16, red-haired and freckled, get mani-pedis.

CARRINGTON

School tomorrow. UGH. I can't believe summer is over already.

PILAR

At least cheering makes it bearable.

CARRINGTON

Except for those ghastly little wannabes that come to tryouts. Do they honestly think they could ever be like me?

PILAR

No one could ever be like you.

Carrington looks at her nails, then blows at the tips.

CARRINGTON

I know. I'm beyond incredible. Am I not?

Pilar nods. Carrington looks at her manicurist. The manicurist, her focus tight on Carrington's nails---

MANICURIST

Yes ma'am, beyond incredible.

EXT. PLATTSBURGH HIGH, FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

Raynie and Elyssa watch as Carrington's limo pulls up. The DRIVER exits and opens the rear door. Carrington emerges. SCREAMING STUDENTS surround her.

RAYNIE

Oh, my, God!

ELYSSA

That's Carrington, the head cheerleader.
I've seen her at Brady's games.

RAYNIE

Seriously?

ELYSSA

I want to be popular, just like her. She
is so cool. Everybody loves Carrington.

Elyssa heads toward the crowd. Raynie hangs her head and
walks toward the school, alone.

EXT. PLATTSBURGH HIGH, BLEACHER AREA - DAY

Elyssa approaches a group of girls. One, dressed Goth,
stares her down.

ELYSSA

Hey, I'm Elyssa. Freshman. Class of 2021.
Who do I see about cheerleading?

GOTH GIRL # 1

That would be Carrington.

ELYSSA

Thanks, where can I find her?

Goth Girl points toward a group of cheerleaders.

EXT. PLATTSBURGH HIGH, FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

PRINCIPAL BARNES, 55, sparse salt and pepper hair, sits
on the bleachers and watches as boys, in over-padded
uniforms, charge onto the field.

COACH JOHNSON, 38, who could be a double for John Cena,
sits beside him.

PRINCIPAL BARNES

Time for the ole team spirit. Eh,
Johnson?

COACH JOHNSON

Sure is, we need a comeback this season.

Coach Johnson rises and heads toward the field. He nods
as he passes the cheerleaders.

PILAR

Looking good, Coach Johnson.

CHEERLEADER #1

Sizzling hot, Coach Johnson.

COACH JOHNSON

Knock it off, ladies, unless you want to spend tomorrow in detention.

Carrington, arms around her girls, eyes Coach Johnson.

CARRINGTON

Anytime Coach, with your sweet --

Elyssa pokes her head into the circle.

ELYSSA

Hey, is one of you Carrington?

Carrington straightens, flips her hair, eyeballs Elyssa.

CARRINGTON

You deaf? I was talking.

ELYSSA

Deaf? No. But I wouldn't call the Coach out on his sweet butt-ox if I were you.

CARRINGTON

Excuse me?

ELYSSA

My brother says it ticks him off.

CARRINGTON

Listen, little girl, the elementary school is a block that way. So scram.

Carrington SNAPS her fingers and moves toward the bleachers. The girls fall in line. Elyssa follows.

At the bleachers, the girls form a barrier.

ELYSSA

I need to talk to Carrington.

An opening parts to reveal Carrington, up against the bleachers, lit cigarette in hand.

ELYSSA (CONT'D)

Are you Carrington?

CARRINGTON

I told you brat, the --

ELYSSA

I know what you said, and I'm not a brat. I'm a freshman. My name's Elyssa, and I want to join the cheerleading squad.

CARRINGTON

Sucks to want.

Carrington chuckles, takes a drag from her cigarette and walks away.

ELYSSA

Smoking's not allowed on school grounds.

CARRINGTON

You the school cop now? Get lost, kid.

ELYSSA

Word is, to be a good cheerleader, I need to learn from the best. You are the best, aren't you?

Carrington stops dead in her tracks and spins around.

CARRINGTON

Yes, I'm the best.

ELYSSA

I want to join your team.

Carrington stares Elyssa down.

CARRINGTON

You have to do what I say, when I say...

Elyssa stares back.

CARRINGTON (CONT'D)

Tomorrow at four. Bring your "A" game. I don't give second chances. Got it?

ELYSSA

I got it.

Elyssa smiles and skips away.

PILAR

Are you seriously letting her tryout?

Carrington tosses her hair and laughs.

CARRINGTON

No worries. When I get done, the last thing that little bee-aach is going to want to be is a cheerleader.

INT. ELYSSA'S HOUSE, BRADY'S ROOM - NIGHT

BRADY, 17, blond and muscular, sits in front of his computer. Elyssa enters and flops onto his bed.

ELYSSA

I want to try out for cheerleading.

BRADY

That's cool.

ELYSSA

You think I'll be good enough?

BRADY

Nah, you're too goofy to be a cheerleader.

ELYSSA

I want to be like Carrington.

BRADY

(turns to face her)

No, you don't.

ELYSSA

But Brady, she's so popular. Everyone loves her.

BRADY

Trust me E, you don't want to be like Carrington.

ELYSSA

Tryouts are tomorrow. I'm really nervous.

BRADY

Nah, you got this. You're an Olympian.

Elyssa smiles.

BRADY (CONT'D)

Just get out there and show them what you got. You'll be great.

Elyssa heads for the door, stops and looks back.

ELYSSA

You gonna come and cheer me on?

BRADY

Miss my kid sister stick it to those snotty cheerleaders. No way.

ELYSSA

Thanks Brady, Olive Juice.

BRADY

Olive Juice.

EXT. PLATTSBURGH HIGH, FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Elyssa and Brady sit on the bleachers. They watch other hopefuls perform back flips and cartwheels.

Carrington steps forward with a piece of paper in hand.

CARRINGTON

Next up, Elyssa.

BRADY

(squeezes Elyssa's hand)

You got this. Breathe.

Elyssa makes her way onto the field and begins her cheer.

ELYSSA

Tigers, Tigers, hear them roar.
Tigers, tigers, watch them soar.
Give me a T, I, G, give me a
E, R, S, what do you get?
Tigers, Tigers, Rah, Rah, Rah.

Elyssa performs her GOLD medal floor routine. The CROWD goes wild. They're on their feet. Applause echoes from the bleachers.

CROWD

ELYSSA, ELYSSA, ELYSSA.

SUPER: "A few days later"

INT. PLATTSBURGH HIGH, CAFETERIA - DAY

Elyssa sits alone. ZACK, 17, light brown hair, blue eyes, letter jacket, his name embossed on the front: Zack Wilson - Captain, saunters up to the table and sits beside her.

ZACK

I'm Zack, may I join you?

Elyssa looks away, a slight smile on her face.

ELYSSA

I know. You play football with my brother, Brady. You're the Captain.

ZACK

Congrats on your win. You're gonna be a great asset to the cheering squad.

ELYSSA

You really think so?

Carrington enters, notices Zack and Elyssa. She lets out an angry growl and stomps over to them.

CARRINGTON

Excuse me!

ELYSSA

Hey Carrington, want to join us?

ZACK

I'm sure Carrington would prefer not to.

Carrington shoots Zack the evil eye and storms away.

ELYSSA

She seems upset. You think she's okay?

ZACK

She's fine. Don't worry about her. So, maybe we could hang out sometime?

ELYSSA

Maybe.

Zack smiles and walks away. Elyssa takes her tray to the counter, sees Raynie and scurries after her.

ELYSSA (CONT'D)

Hey Raynie, hold up.

Raynie glances back, but keeps going. Elyssa mopes away.

SUPER: "two weeks later"

PLATTSBURGH HIGH, PRINCIPAL'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Elyssa sits and fidgets. The SECRETARY glances at her and shakes her head. The Principal's office door swings open.

PRINCIPAL BARNES

Elyssa, please step into my office.

Elyssa stands up, squeezes past him and disappears into his office. Principal Barnes follows. The door closes.

INT. PLATTSBURGH HIGH, PRINCIPAL'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

Principal Barnes signals for Elyssa to take a seat.

PRINCIPAL BARNES

Elyssa, several things have been brought to my attention.

ELYSSA

Yes, sir.

PRINCIPAL BARNES

As you know, there has been some vandalism in the girls' locker room.

Elyssa nods.

PRINCIPAL BARNES (CONT'D)

There have also been some defamatory comments about one of our cheerleaders written on the bleachers.

Elyssa nods.

PRINCIPAL BARNES (CONT'D)

I was told you were responsible.

Elyssa jumps to her feet and shakes her head.

ELYSSA

No Sir! I didn't do any of that.

PRINCIPAL BARNES

Calm down. I believe you.

ELYSSA

You do?

PRINCIPAL BARNES

Yes, I know exactly who's responsible. Thanks to Raynie.

ELYSSA

Raynie?

INT. PLATTSBURGH HIGH, HALL - DAY

Elyssa heads down the hall. Raynie pins something on the Bulletin Board. Elyssa stops to look.

HEAD CHEERLEADER CONTEST - TRYOUTS FRIDAY AFTER SCHOOL -
IF YOU DARE!

Elyssa grins from ear to ear.

RAYNIE
You going to try out?

ELYSSA
Yup.

Raynie turns away, Elyssa grabs her shoulder.

ELYSSA (CONT'D)
Thanks.

RAYNIE
For what?

ELYSSA
Having my back.

RAYNIE
Isn't that what friends do?

Elyssa hangs her head.

ELYSSA
I haven't been much of a friend lately.

SUPER: "Friday afternoon"

EXT. PLATTSBURGH HIGH, FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Brady helps Elyssa stretch beside the bleachers.

Carrington performs her routine like a pro. Everyone
APPLAUDS. The judges hold up their score cards - three
tens and a nine.

The next contestant steps up, a few CHEERS echo from the
crowd. The judges hold up their cards - four eights.

Elyssa steps up and bows to the judges. Her music BLARES.
She performs her floor exercise routine like the Olympian
she is. The viewers erupt with CHEERS and APPLAUSE.

The judges deliberate. Carrington paces back and forth.
She shoots an evil glare their direction. Pilar hovers
over her. She pats her back.

PILAR
She was awfully good.

Carrington pushes Pilar's hand away.

PILAR (CONT'D)

Not as good as you, of course. No one is better than you.

The judges make their decision. One by one they raise their score cards.

JUDGE # 1

Ten.

JUDGE # 2

Ten.

Carrington grabs at her chest.

JUDGE # 3

Ten.

Carrington takes a deep breath. Closes her eyes and leans back against the bleachers.

JUDGE # 4

Ten.

Carrington lets out a SCREAM and falls to the ground. Pilar fans at her with a Pom Pom.

CHEERING students rush from the bleachers. They step over and on Carrington as they make their way to Elyssa.

Elyssa jumps up and down. Zack grabs her and plants a big kiss on her. She stares up at him in shock. Zack lifts her up onto Brady's shoulders.

BRADY

So, is this what you wanted?

Elyssa spies Raynie by the bleachers, both thumbs up.

ELYSSA

No, it's even better.

THE END