

THE DANCE WE DO

A ten-minute dramedy by
Anne G'Fellers-Mason

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www.youthplays.com
info@youthplays.com
424-703-5315

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

BECCA, female, 17 years old. High school senior, talented dancer, haunted by her family's legacy and the memory of her brother's and sister's many scholarly achievements.

BRIDGET, female, early 20s. Becca's older sister, currently away in college, views achievement as a competition. She appears as a memory in the play.

BRIAN, male, early 20s. Becca's older brother, currently away in college, views achievement as a competition. He appears as a memory in the play.

AMY, female, 17 years old. High school senior, talented dancer, outgoing and outspoken, one of Becca's good friends.

SETTING

The quad or open outside area of a high school.

(BECCA sits in an open space, a large book spread across her lap. Her backpack, extremely overstuffed, sits beside her. BRIDGET and BRIAN sit behind her, their backs to her.)

(Becca works on a problem, muttering to herself and chewing on the end of her pencil.)

BRIDGET: Wrong.

(Becca erases and tries again.)

BRIAN: So wrong.

(Becca erases, frustration mounting.)

(AMY enters. She's obviously come from dance practice. She is not aware of Bridget and Brian. Becca and Amy make eye contact, there is obvious tension.)

AMY: Hi.

BECCA: *(Weakly:)* Hey.

(Amy sits, finding something to keep herself occupied. Becca returns to her math. After a moment...)

BRIDGET: Not even close.

BRIAN: Man, you are bad at this. Do you even understand how math works?

(Becca erases furiously.)

AMY: That our Precalc homework?

BECCA: *(Preoccupied:)* Extra credit.

AMY: It's a little early in the year for extra credit, don't ya think?

BECCA: I need to keep my average up.

AMY: Becca, it's still August.

BECCA: I'm trying to work, Amy –

AMY: (*Obviously hurt:*) Sorry.

(*Becca returns to the problem and writes a new answer.*)

BRIDGET: Still wrong. You know, I took Advanced Placement Calculus as a junior, not *Precalculus*.

BRIAN: I took Advanced Placement Calculus as a sophomore, not a junior.

BRIDGET: I got a 2380 on my SAT.

BRIAN: 2385.

BRIDGET AND BRIAN: What did you get, Becca?

(*Bridget and Brian exchange a knowing look. Becca grows increasingly frustrated as they continue.*)

BRIAN: (*Whispering:*) You're doing it all wrong.

BRIDGET: I never erased a problem, not once. I won the Math Bowl two years in a row.

BRIAN: All wrong.

BRIDGET: Aw, and you're making a mess of your paper, how unfastidious of you.

BRIAN: That means messy. Synonym bedraggled, antonym tidy. 2385, what, what!

BRIDGET: You always were the messiest –

BRIAN: – the smallest –

BRIDGET: – the weakest –

BRIAN: – and definitely NOT the smartest of the Donalson kids. (*To Bridget:*) And I was Math Bowl champ three years in a row, so, chew on that.

(Bridget gives him an incredulous look.)

(Back to Becca:) Mom and Dad were so proud.

BRIDGET: Proud of us, proud of the older siblings.

(They continue to chant their last two lines. Becca erases and erases until there's a hole in her paper.)

BECCA: *(To Bridget and Brian:)* Shut up! Shut up!

AMY: Excuse me?!

BECCA: What—

AMY: Are you mad at me?!

BECCA: No, I, that wasn't—

AMY: Listen, you're weirding me out, Becca. We've barely spoken since school started. Are you avoiding me?

BECCA: I'm not—

AMY: You know, dance team auditions are tomorrow and you haven't been to any of the warm up practices. You're trying out, right?

(Becca tries to speak, but nothing comes out.)

I don't get it. This is your Senior year, and you're not gonna dance? You could get scholarships.

BRIDGET: Major in dance, really? I played oboe, but you don't see me majoring in that. But you *will* see me using my Rhodes scholarship to change the world.

BRIAN: I ate 20 hot dogs in 10 minutes, maybe I should've applied for a scholarship in that instead of accepting my full ride to MIT?

(Bridget and Brian laugh.)

AMY: I thought that's what you wanted. That's what you said you wanted – back when we talked.

BECCA: I—

BRIDGET: Mom and Dad are so proud, proud of US.

BRIAN: They're proud of US.

(Bridget and Brian continue to chant their last two lines.)

BECCA: Stop it and let me think!

(Bridget and Brian fall silent.)

AMY: What is going on? Why are you freaking out?

BECCA: I'm not. I'm fine.

(Amy's not buying it. She stands and pulls a reluctant Becca to her feet.)

AMY: Come on, get up!

BECCA: What are you doing?

AMY: We're gonna dance this out, whatever it is.

BECCA: Amy —

AMY: You did it to me last year after the Brad fiasco. Turnabout is fair play, Donalson. Come on, dance it out! What is it? What's wrong?

(Amy keeps Becca moving, all the while asking her "what's wrong" in different ways over and over.)

BECCA: *(Exploding:)* It's my senior year and my SAT score sucks! I haven't filled out any college apps, and there's no way I'm gonna be a Rhodes Scholar, or get into M-I-freaking-T! I'll be banished from the family, but that's okay since I'm obviously such a disappointment to the Donalson family!

(Becca takes a deep breath, relieved to have finally said it.)

AMY: Your parents come to every performance. Any time you dance, they're there.

BECCA: It's my *only* extracurricular. They HAVE to come.

AMY: (*Pointedly:*) No, they don't.

BECCA: I just—I thought once Brian and Bridget graduated, I'd have room to breathe. But I hear their voices, all the time, picking at me like they used to. Mom and Dad never told 'em to stop. I wish they would've. Maybe they thought it was a big joke, and I was in on it. I don't know. But it's uh, it's the dance we do.

(*Amy nods, taking a moment to find the words.*)

AMY: Okay, so your siblings did amazing, brainy things, but could either of them dance?

BECCA: No. Brian looked like a chicken. He'd stick his neck out like this.

(*She demonstrates.*)

BRIAN: Hey, girls were into it.

BRIDGET: What girls?

BECCA: And Bridget, she'd stand in the corner and do this weird kind of bob thing.

AMY: Oh yeah, the awkward corner bob.

BRIAN: Ha!

BRIDGET: It was a statement of nonconformity!

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