

THE TAP DANCER

CAMILLA IS BY NO MEANS AN EXPERIENCED TAP DANCER AND MIGHT HAVE HAD ONLY A SINGLE LESSON IN TAP. CAMILLA IS SELF ASSURED AND FASHION-AWARE, ASSERTIVE WITH AFFECTED MANNERISMS AND SHE IS ACCUSTOMED TO GETTING HER OWN WAY! SHE SEES A GLITTERING FUTURE FOR HERSELF – IN SHOWBUSINESS. (CAMILLA MIGHT SPEAK WITH A SOUTH LONDON OR REGIONAL ACCENT).

ENTER: CAMILLA, NOISILY IN TAPSHOES, CONCEALING 'SOMETHING' BEHIND HER BACK. SHE CLATTERS FORWARD ANGRILY.

CAMILLA: Can't tap on carpet.
It's **impossible!**

SHE TAPS A TOE AND POUTS

And then...

If I don't practise...

(Pause)

Well! That'll be that.

I'll **never** make it to the top:
never see my name in lights.

SHE ATTEMPTS A SHUFFLE, HOP, STEP

Showbiz is **desperately** competitive, you know.

*SHE ADOPTS A PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO LONG-NECK POSE
AND SIGHS IN EXAGGERATED FASHION*

Life's really not fair!

*SHE PULLS OUT A VASE IN TWO FRAGMENTS FROM BEHIND
HER BACK AND VIEWS THE BREAKAGE WITH CONCERN*

(Sulkily)

I was only trying to perfect the routine, after all.

SHE ATTEMPTS TO PIECE THE VASE TOGETHER

Her favourite!

(Pause)

What am I going to say?

(Fast to herself)

Ttt, ttt, ttt, ttt...

Of course I know **now** that I shouldn't've
been standing on top of the sideboard.

It **was** a silly thing to do...

SHE SHAKES HER HEAD

CAMILLA: ...It just wasn't big enough to tap dance on!

SHE SHUFFLES HER FEET AND SHRUGS HER SHOULDERS

Actually, everything was fine...

...until I did the high kick!

Then the vase sort've, sprang up.

And flew through the air!

(Following the movement of the vase)

And landed in two pieces the other side of the room.

SHE TAPS LOUDLY IN A TIGHT CIRCLE

Could blame the cat!

(Pause)

Trouble with that is...

After the accident,

when I tried to stand the pieces up again

on the sideboard,

hoping it'd look as if nothing had happened.

Then, only when it was far too late:

did I notice lots and lots of little dug out pits

in the smooth wood, just where I'd been tapping.

She'll know the cat can't've done that!

SHE HOLDS UP THE OFFENDING FRAGMENTS AND EVALUATES

(Optimistically)

Perhaps the little pits won't be noticed.

Perhaps the vase won't be missed for ages and ages –

If I just keep quiet.

SHE SMILES; THE SMILE GIVES WAY TO A LOOK OF HORROR

What if she's given masses of flowers?

The'll be nothing to put them in!

SHE PACES AND STAMPS A FOOT IN UTTER FRUSTRATION

What am I going to do?

Suppose I'll have to own up and cry a lot.

That's all I can do.

SHE TURNS CATCHING A SOUND AND HASTENS TO ONE SIDE.

SHE LISTENS OUT AND PULLS A FACE BEFORE RUSHING BACK

She's on her way downstairs, **HELP!**

SHE VIEWS THE FRAGMENTS WITH DESPERATION

LLA: (Shouting)
Mummy! There's something I want to talk to you about.

*SHE SEARCHES FOR SOMEWHERE TO HIDE THE BROKEN VASE
FINALLY CLASPS THE FRAGMENTS BEHIND HER BACK IN PANIC*

Mummy! I want to give up tap... I hate it!

SHE THROWS DOWN THE VASE ANGRILY AND STORMS OFF

EXIT CAMILLA