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I don't really see why it has to be up to them. I mean, who are they anyway? Cell phone tragics. TV couch potatoes. All they know about movement is running their thumb around a keypad, but they're the ones who have to decide whether it's me or Allegra that gets through to the next round. Why would they care, one way or the other? Why would they give a stuff?

But apparently that's where I'm wrong. Apparently I'm at risk of stuffing up my chances in this competition if I even think like that, because it all depends on making people give a stuff. See, I thought this competition was about dancing but it's actually about getting people to send text messages. You have to get them so worked up as they're sitting there on the couch in front of the TV screen that they go right ahead and text your name into the program. They vote for you.

And that's a bit of a mystery to me, frankly. But if I actually say that to anyone—like the producers or the coach or the competitors—they look at me as if I'm about to be in a road accident. 'Ohmygod. You can't be serious.'

I've seen a few facial expressions during the course of this competition. Or on my journey as the producers insist on calling it. For the audition I did a tango solo on four inch heels and I saw all three judges go into freeze-frame, with their mouths open. 'You're through.' That's all they said. They were shell-shocked.

See, I can dance. It's what I do, and I've been doing it since as far back as I can remember. And what's more I'm always working on it. If I'm awake, I'm working on it. If I'm asleep, I'm dreaming I'm working on it. You could say my specialisation is classical jazz but I do any style, which matters in this competition because at each round you have to pick a card, and on the card is your dance style for that week's show. For some you get a partner, and some are solos. I prefer solos.

When we got to the cut-off for the top twenty everyone was praying they wouldn't get the waltz because it doesn't let you really strut your stuff, but I drew the waltz card, didn't I? That meant I had to work with Vince, the regular Clayton's partner employed on the show, and Vince was pretty nervous when I decided to stretch it right out, with the slowest tempo and the longest lines. But Vince handled it okay when I put in some high-speed footwork and a deep sway-back spin. At the end Pippi Zola, the female member of the panel, who sits in the middle and normally specialises in being a total bitch, said it looked like I never made contact with the floor. But the week after, in the solo jive, I made contact. There were sparks flying. I swear there was a flash of lightning at the end.

'That was in-sane' Amos said. Pippi Zola didn't say anything. She just got up off her chair and screamed.

Now we're counting down through the top ten and the judges keep telling us it's getting tougher, which makes me wonder how Allegra's managed to last this long. She's a few bullets short of a round of ammo and I don't see how she's going to be able to get them delivered in time. For this week's show she drew the West-coast swing, and you need a full barrel for that.

I drew the break-dance, so I went for broke. I did windmills at angles they'd never seen before, morphed them into airflares and landed on a one arm hollow-back freeze. I did a tippy-toe slide with a momentum that took me right off stage so I had to back-flip on again for the jackhammers. I got some twisted rhythms happening there but then I wound them all up together in a combo spin so fast the panel was all boss-eyed when I froze it again at the end.

I'd spun them right out of their wheelhouse, hadn't I? And it took them quite a few seconds to come back with the verdicts. Eldrich was first, and I could see he had an expression on his face that he'd deliberately put there to change the vibe.

'Well, it all happened,' he said. 'But you were out of it. It was like, where were you?'

'Right.' Pippi Zola was doing an exaggerated nodding thing. 'Right. The lights are on, right? But nobody's home. You get what I'm saying?'

Amos followed up. 'Yeah. I don't know what it is, but there's just something missing there. It's like you're on semi-automatic all the time—and you keep trying to explode out of it. I mean, nobody here is in any doubt you're charged up. One of these days you're gonna leave a hole in the ground. And then you'll be just—" he shrugged his shoulders and held his hands out sideways —'gone.'

After that it was Allegra's turn for the West Coast Swing. I didn't watch it but I heard when the verdicts came in.

'Did somebody put lead in your shoes, or what?' Pippi said.

'Yeah,' said Amos. 'Too slow.'

Too slow? Too slow on the West Coast Swing? That's tragic. That's totally fuck'n tragic. But anyway, now it's her and me for the dance-off, to see who gets the votes. And I know what I'm doing for the dance-off. I'm doing the West Coast Swing. I'm going to burn the place up. All those kids out there in couch potato land with their cell-phones in their hands, they're going to think they're holding grenades. But I don't care what they do with them. Why should I give a stuff?

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Jane Goodall.