

Black screen. Plick, plock of ball. An exhalation, a gasp, an inhibited groan.

MARK (V/O)

Watch!

TITLE - "SHORT, WHITE, PLEATED".

1. INT. SQUASH COURT. DAY

Rackets smash. Trainers squeak. TAMSIN's lithe hips drive a fast game against MARK.

2. INT SEATS BEHIND GLASS PARTITION. DAY.

DEXTER is entranced by the swing of Tamsin's hips and skirt.

3. INT. SQUASH COURT. DAY.

She feels Dexter's eyes and loses focus.

MARK

Keep on that ball!

4. INT. SEATS BEHIND GLASS DIVIDE. DAY.

Dexter whizzes his eyes back to the ball.

5. INT. SQUASH COURT THROUGH GLASS. DAY.

Tamsin misses, sucks her teeth.

TAMSIN

Wasn't expecting to keep it up so long.

Dexter watches her pick up the ball with a pert, audible twirl of skirt. Mark stretches his eyes at her.

MARK

Expect nothing.

He jerks his head at Dexter, who pads in.

TAMSIN

(grinning ruefully)
But expect it all.

Dexter manages to catch the ball Tamsin tosses. She prepares for

his serve. Her skirt twitches. The serve fails. Dexter grits his teeth to retry. Tamsin long suffers politely.

6. INT. CORRIDOR. DAY.

Dexter passes the " Out Of Order" Ladies' Changing room. Water leaks under the door. He goes to the Men's, knocks.

TAMSIN (V/O)

Nearly. Always the Ladies, isn't it?
Hair in the drains, I ask you.

Polyester rustles behind the door. DEXTER looks up the corridor to the noticeboard, where Mark pins a notice.

TAMSIN (V/O)

Sorry to hold you up, Mark.

DEXTER

It's Dexter. I'm holding you up, Tam. Sorry.

TAMSIN (V/O)

Don't be daft. I've got to play someone...

Mark bends a drawing pin on the wall, tuts, heads back up the corridor.

Tamsin emerges from Men's changing - sparkling clean, glamorous in a track suit. She holds the door.

TAMSIN

All yours.

Dexter moves through.

It's confidence, Dex. Let go. Enjoy it.

7. INT. CHANGING ROOM. DAY.

Dexter pulling off his teeshirt, steps on Tamsin's skirt. He frowns at its brief polyester rustle, gingerly picks it up.

8. INT. CORRIDOR. DAY.

The Men's Changing door opens. Dexter peers into the corridor. Space and silence.

9. INT. CHANGING ROOM. MIRROR. DAY.

Dexter, holding his racket, wearing the skirt, inspects his reflection, tilts a hip, smiles.

10. INT. CORRIDOR. DAY.

Mark presses the pin into the notice then heads for the Men's changing room.

11. INT. CHANGING ROOM. DAY.

Dexter tries backhands, forehands, leaps and twirls in the skirt. Checking an especially fabulous pose in the mirror he sees Mark, gaping, and freezes.

MARK

(approaching, studiedly casual)
Where've you been hiding it?

DEXTER

I - I'm not - (fumbles for the zip)
I was going to give it back... I...

MARK

Sure... Thursday. No hurry.

Mark slides a finger into a pleat. Their eyes meet. Mark runs his finger down the pleat. Both watch fold and finger, fascinated. Banging at the door.

TAMSIN (V/O)

You decent?

Dexter rips off the skirt, drops it. They flee to the showers.

Mark?

Tamsin sticks her head round the door, hears the showers, spots the skirt, darts in, picks it up.

Mark? - Your lift's here.

One shower turns off.

12. INT. SHOWER CUBICLE. DAY.

Dexter under the running shower, glances warily over the top as Mark passes, drying himself and struggling on clothes. Dexter turns on the cold.

13. INT. SQUASH COURT. DAY.

Tamsin, flirty, tries to concentrate as Mark, standing behind her, guides her forehand.

14. INT. SQUASH COURT SEATING. DAY.

Dexter, approaching with a can of energy drink, eyes...

15. INT. SQUASH COURT THROUGH GLASS. DAY.

... the skirt behind MARK's muscular thighs.

MARK

Head up and drive it!

His wedding ring flashes as he guides Tamsin's stroke. He spots DEXTER, entering, over his shoulder. Dexter gulps.

TAMSIN

Wondered if you were coming.

DEXTER

Sorry I -

His eyes drop momentarily to the skirt. Mark scoops him the ball.

MARK

Don't worry about it.

Dexter smashes it at the wall, amazing everyone. Tamsin gets it in the nick of time, bashes it back at a wicked angle. Dexter is distracted by the skirt's rustle.

MARK

Dexter!

Mark plays it for him, returns it to Tamsin who slams it to Dexter. Fast knock up between three.

16. INT. SEATING AREA. DAY.

Tamsin wipes her face. Dexter contrives to douse her skirt with energy drink.

TAMSIN

For crying out -!

DEXTER

No sweat, my Uncle... He's got a drycleaners.

Mark gets very busy tying his shoe.

17. INT. SHOWER. DAY.

Dexter opens his eyes under running water. Mark strokes the pleats to cling Dexter's legs, lifts and spreads the skirt across his fingers. The wedding ring shines through the translucent cloth. Dexter catches his breath.

18. INT. BATHROOM SINK. DAY.

The tap runs. Soap suds shake into the water.

19. INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

Distant television. Dexter struggles to set up an ironing board.

20. INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

Hanging high off a laundry rack, the stainless skirt, with knife sharp pleats, listens to the rustle of polythene. A door creaks closed. Hurried footsteps. Dexter bustles in unhooking the hanger from a drycleaner's bag.

21. EXT. SPORTS CENTRE CARPARK. DAY.

Tamsin swoops up on a bike.

TAMSIN

Brill!

She seizes the skirt, rips off polythene.

Quel whizz on pleats!

Dexter spots a red Fiat arriving.

DEXTER

Yeah. If he gets it straight after it's worn.
Should be done every time really.

TAMSIN

You on commission?

DEXTER

Free to you, Tamsin.

He hides a blush, sees Mark get out of the Fiat. The WOMAN DRIVER hands him his kit.

TAMSIN

(touching Dexter's cheek)
You're really sweet, Dex. Thanks.

She gives him a ravishing smile. He tries to return it. The Fiat drives off. Mark approaches, grinning broadly.

21. INT. SQUASH COURT. DAY.

Tamsin runs to return Dexter's impressive shot and is further unsettled by MARK eyeing her thighs.

22. INT. SHOWERS. DAY.

The skirt drips over Dexter's thighs. Ogling it hungrily, Mark strides towards it stripping. He tosses his shirt over his shoulder, steps out of his shorts into the shower, grasps a pleat, sighs. Dexter steadies himself against the wall, giddy with pleasure.

23. INT. COURT. DAY.

TAMSIN dives and misses a shot.

24. INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

Steam hisses as Dexter irons the waistband. A shower patters. Dexter smiles. The iron noses the top of a pleat.

25. INT. COURT. DAY.

Dexter gives Tamsin the run around for the ball.

26. INT. SHOWER. DAY

Dexter inches the skirt up. Mark's hand moves along the hem. Dexter closes his eyes.

27. INT. SQUASH COURT. DAY.

Dexter and Mark play a spirited game. Behind the glass, Tamsin, left out, fiddles with her pristine pleats. Catching the men exchange complicit smiles, she narrows her eyes.

28. INT. SEATING AREA.

Fixed on the players, Tamsin slowly gets up, sees...

29. INT SQUASH COURT

Mark cross in slow motion to correct Dexter's forehand from behind, gently holding his wrist steady. A perfect shot. Tamsin hovers, then...

30. INT. SQUASH COURT. DAY.

Tamsin pounds onto the court, intercepting the shot.

TAMSIN

Remember me?

The ball bangs the wall and dies. Beat. Tamsin glowers.

MARK

Give him a chance. We were warming up.

He ambles to the ball, tosses it to her. TAMSIN lets it fall.

TAMSIN

I've cooled right down.

The ball rolls sadly away. Dexter and Mark look guiltily at her. She stalks out.

31. INT CORRIDOR BY SEATING. DAY.

Tamsin shakes Mark off, stalks on. DEXTER lingers at the door of the court. The departing skirt rustles at him.

MARK

Hey Tamsin! Be a sport!

TAMSIN

Enjoy!

Mark and Dexter exchange hunted looks.

32. INT. COURT. DAY.

Mark tensely takes up position for Dexter's serve, which falls flat. Dexter picks it up, serves again. Flat again.

33. INT. SHOWERS. DAY.

Water patters behind a closed door. Dexter, naked, takes a deep breath, pulls the door open. Mark glares, slams it shut. Dexter goes to the next shower, crying.

34. INT. CORRIDOR. DAY.

Mark hurries to the exit with his kitbag. Dexter rushes out of the Mens' Changing Room.

DEXTER

Mark, wait!

MARK

I said forget it. Don't even think about it.

They reach the swing door and bowl through.

35. EXT. CARPARK. DAY.

Dexter darts in front of Mark and walks backwards.

DEXTER

Listen -

MARK

No way. Nobody else will either.

He flashes Dexter a smile, pats his shoulder with his left hand. His wedding ring glints. He angles away to the Fiat and his wife, who leans on the bonnet, wearing trousers.

END

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