

Lame Swans

A graphic novel

By Phoebe Roberts



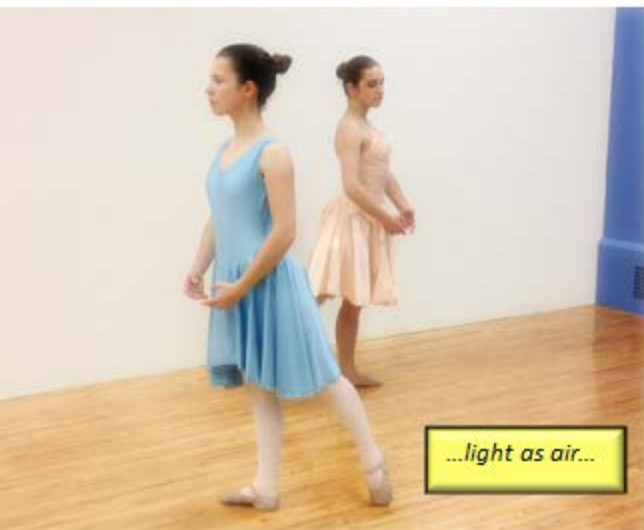


In ballet, there is a traditional motif of sleeping and waking.

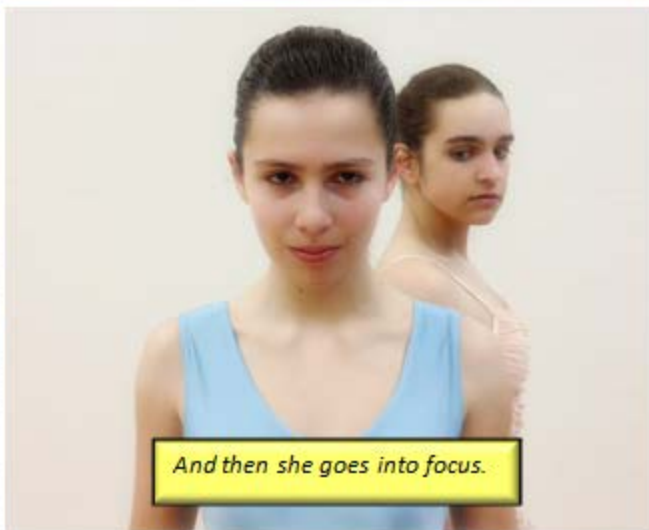




*The dancer rises,
unfolding like a
flower...*



...light as air...



And then she goes into focus.

First.



Second.





Third.



Fourth.

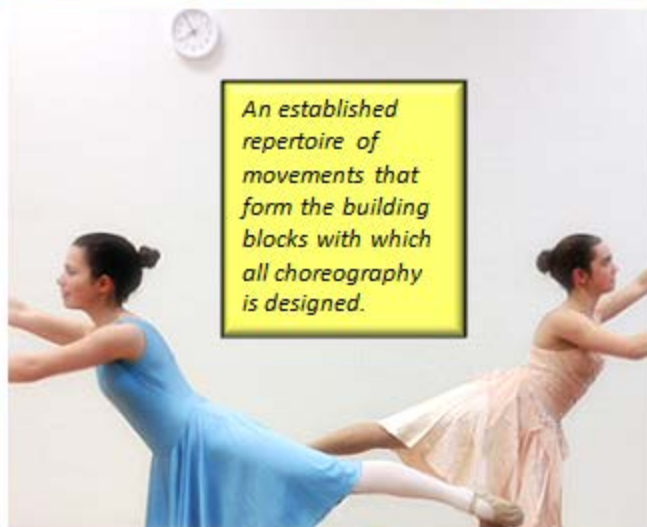


Fifth.



*Ballet is closely
codified.*

*Tendu.
Dégagé.
Ronde du
jambe.*



*An established
repertoire of
movements that
form the building
blocks with which
all choreography
is designed.*



*Established in practice over
hundreds of years.*



We're doing a minimalist, modernized Swan Lake. Small cast, so lots of opportunity for featuring.



The practice in its entirety consists of honing the performance of this limited repertoire.



So show me the best you've got.

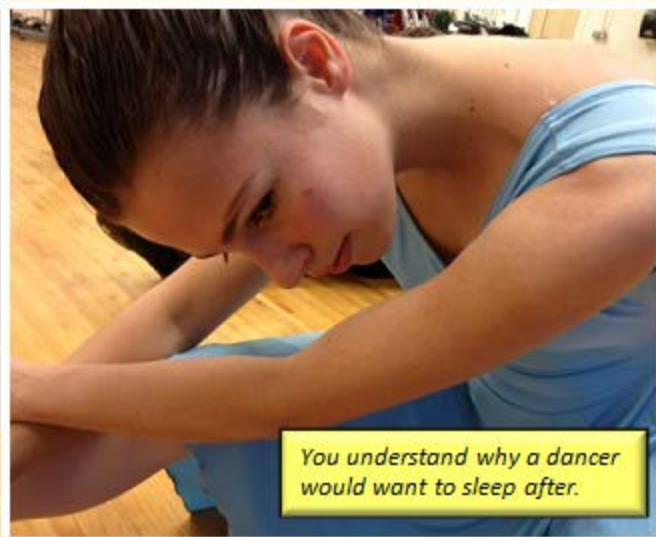
The company is run like an army, and we are the soldiers.



By its very nature, I will never, ever be good enough.



Thank you, everyone.
Cast list's up on Thursday.



You understand why a dancer would want to sleep after.



"Like... like no matter how hard I try, he always pushes for more."



"No matter how well I think I do, I am never going to do well enough for him."



No wonder you're so stressed out. You must hate working for him.

Oh, no, it's not him.



Joanna, he's brilliant. He has so much talent and creativity, and all this passion for dance... if anything, it's because I'm not good enough.



You're an amazing dancer, Lise.

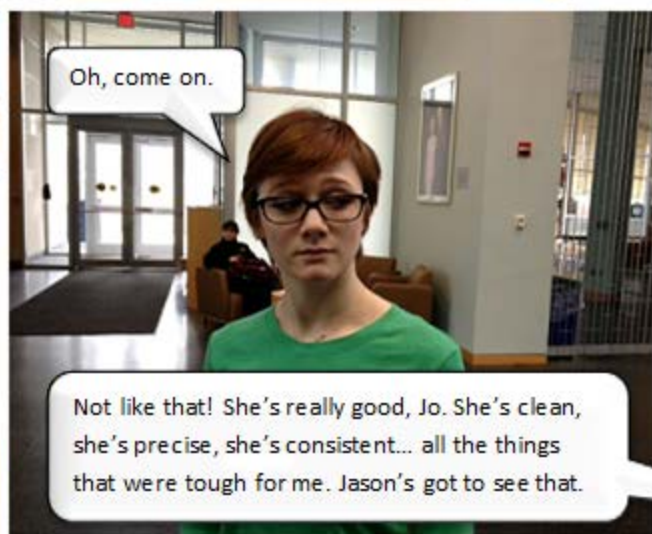
Not amazing enough. Not for him, anyway. But believe me, he's not the problem.



Then what is?

It's... this other girl. This other dancer in the company.







"She has so much focus, you know? I bet she wasn't second-guessing herself, trying to gauge Jason's reaction."



Well, as far as I'm concerned, you are the dancer to beat.

I hope you didn't psych yourself out with worrying.



Oh, geez. That's probably exactly what I did.

Don't beat yourself up too much about it. That'll only make things worse.



I just... don't know if I have it, you know?



Well... only one way to find out.



*Tchaikovsky's classic
SWAN LAKE
Choreographed by Jason Haviland*

CAST

*Odette, the White Swan.....Lise Day
Siegfried, the Prince.....Bryce O'Connor
Rothbart, the wicked baron.....Chad Belling
Marina Glass*





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**CAST**

*Odette, the White Swan.....Lise Day*  
*Siegfried, the Prince.....Bryce O'Conne*  
*Rothbart, the wicked baron.....Chad Belling*  
*Odile, the Black Swan.....Marina Glass*  
*Swan maiden corp.....Jessica Avery*  
*.....Amber Farraday*  
*.....Olivia Sheridan*









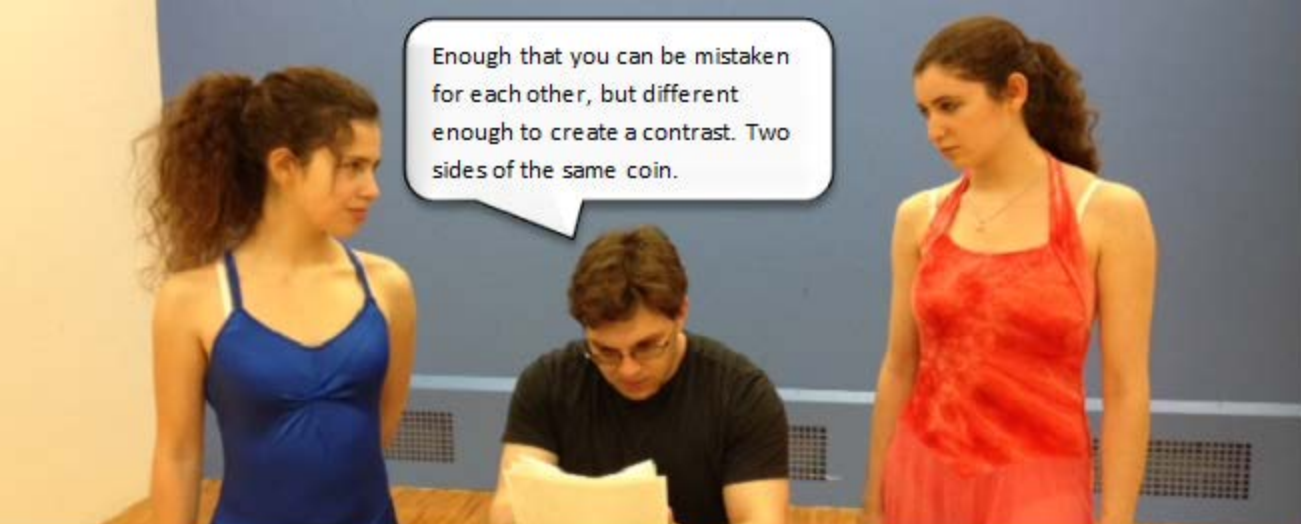


















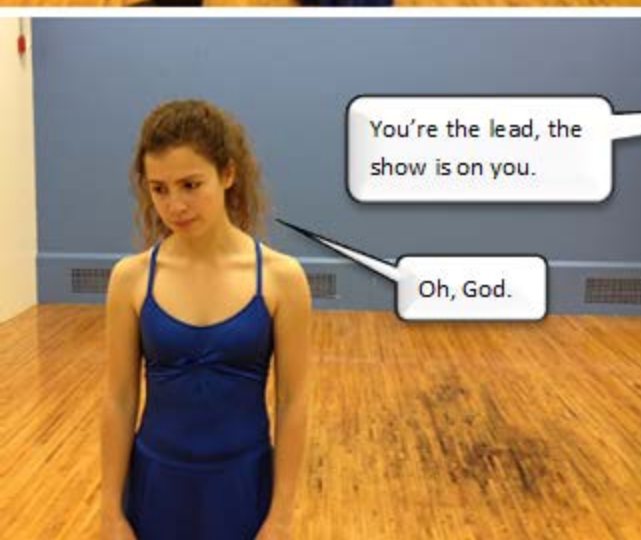














Really?

He choreographed all his piece so that he never had to. And has a whole method named after him.

Fine some way to make it work, Lise.

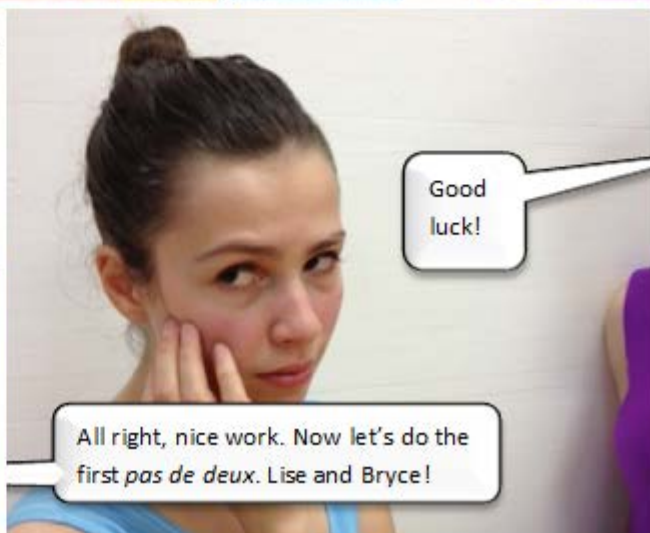
Back in five, ladies. And this time, be a little professional.









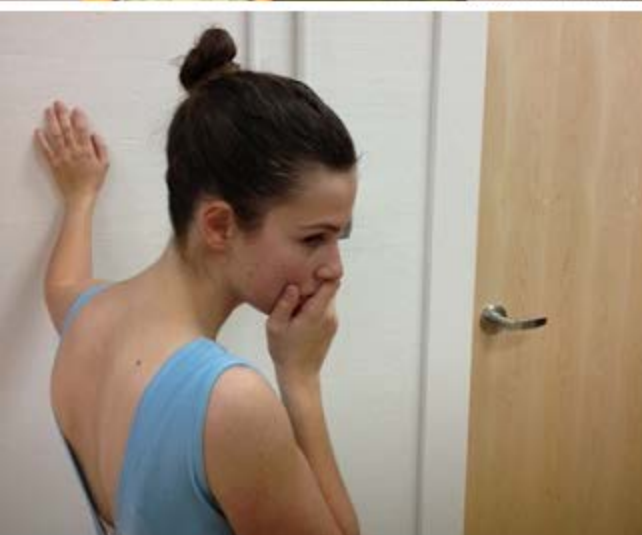






















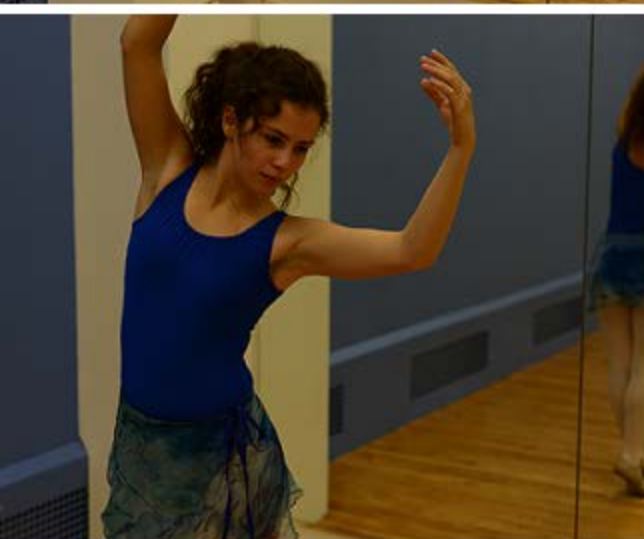












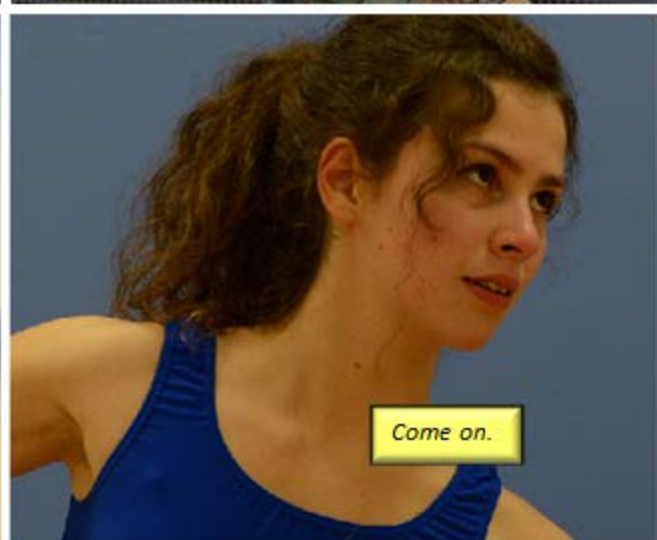




No. Again.



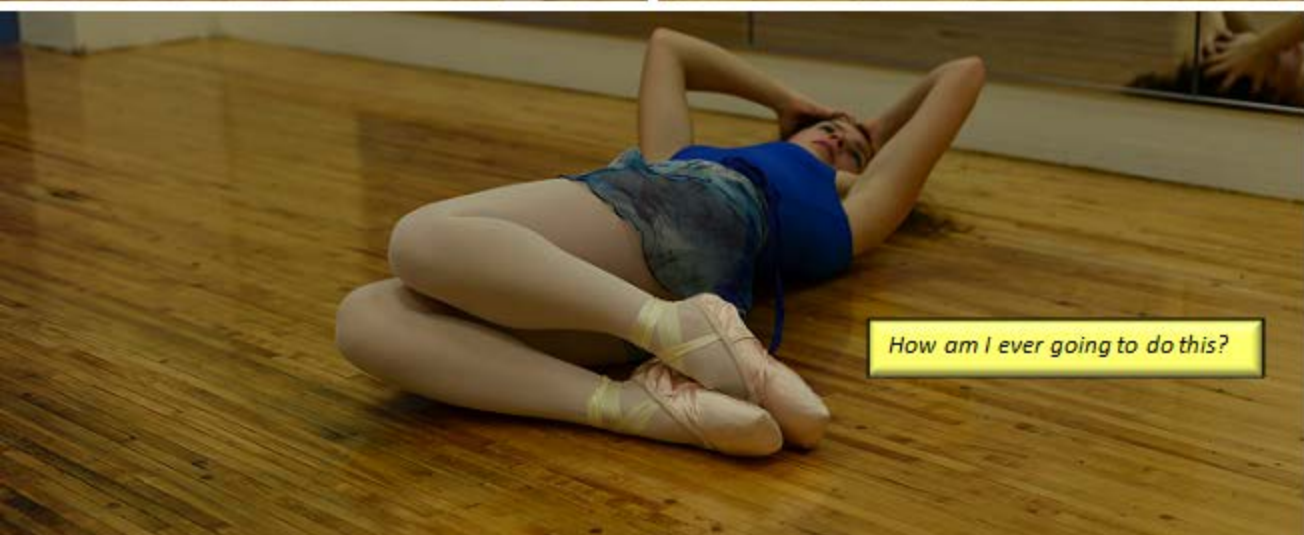
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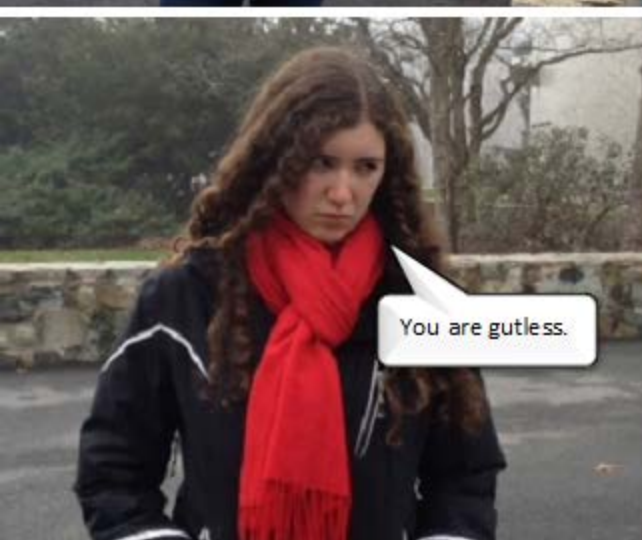


Come on.

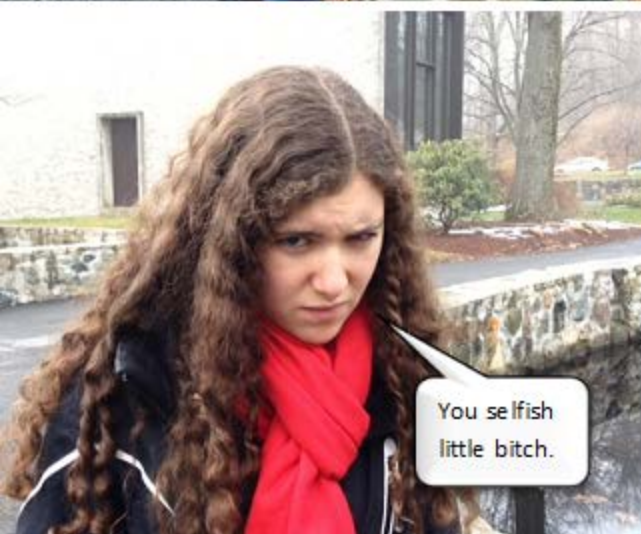














Unbelievable. You have no idea how to push, do you?

Of course I do! That's all ballet is!

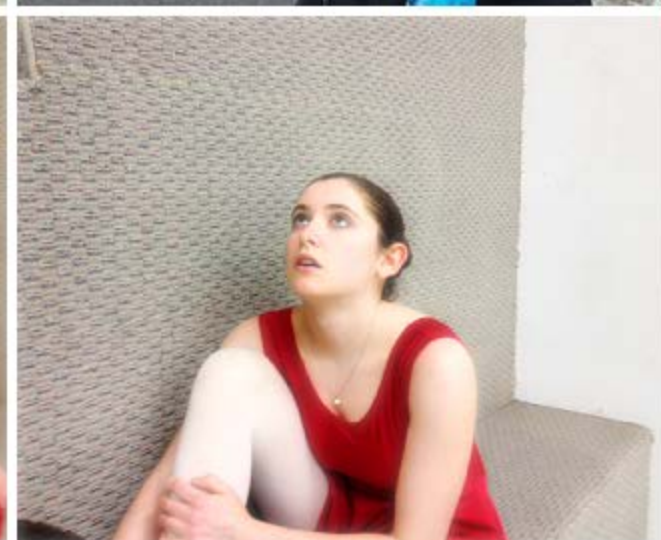
"You never had to push. You're all talent, all perfect form. It was always easy for you, wasn't it?"

"I worked hard too!"

"You never had anyone ever tell you that your legs were too stocky, or that your hips were too tight."

"You never had to fight against a turnout that wasn't wide enough, or too-short ligaments, or... or..."









"You know that it's like to keep pushing and keep pushing no matter how much it hurts?"



"Until eventually you work them so hard they can't take it anymore?"



I saw.  
It's bad,  
isn't it?  
...  
Isn't it?



You have no idea.

You won't be able to go on like that much longer.




Exactly! Don't you get it? This is my last chance! It's going to blow, Lise. I know that, I'm not an idiot. It's only a matter of time.

So why are you doing this to yourself? Do you want to ruin that leg forever?


What's the point if I can never dance again?




A photograph of two young women standing on a stone wall outdoors. The woman on the left is wearing a blue scarf and a black jacket, while the woman on the right is wearing a red scarf and a black jacket. They are both looking towards the camera.

Is that worth being in pain  
for the rest of your life?

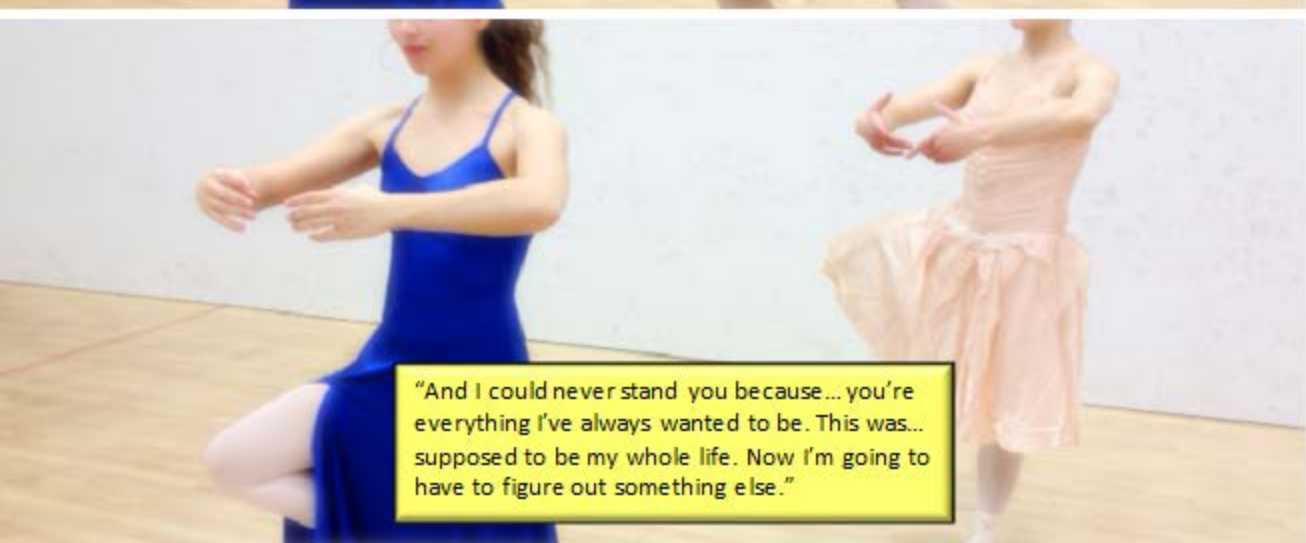
Ha! Too late.

A close-up photograph of a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a red scarf and a black jacket. She is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression.

I'm on my way  
out, Lise. I'm  
going to go out  
on top. And I  
can't do that if  
you bail out.  
You're the one  
they want to  
see.

A photograph of two young women in dance costumes. The woman on the left is wearing a blue leotard, and the woman on the right is wearing a pink leotard. They are both in a dance pose, with their arms extended.

"You're the one that has the  
talent, the skill, the passion,  
the look... everything they  
want. Jason saw it, that's  
why he picked you."

A photograph of two young women in dance costumes. The woman on the left is wearing a blue leotard, and the woman on the right is wearing a pink leotard. They are both in a dance pose, with their arms extended.

"And I could never stand you because... you're  
everything I've always wanted to be. This was...  
supposed to be my whole life. Now I'm going to  
have to figure out something else."









Oh, it's all right. I'm sure my reputation will survive you ruining my show. Of course, that's the least of your worries. Marina will kill you if you wreck her career before that knee of hers does.



You know about that?

Come on, Lise.



I've been dancing, teaching dance, and designing dance for most of my life. Do you think I can't see when a dancer's body is breaking down?

How can you let her go on like that?



That knee's going to take her out before long. She doesn't need me to do it.

But she's ruining herself.



I know. But she doesn't want pity, she wants to dance. I won't take that from her.













