

May

"You'll be on crutches for 4 weeks," Dr. Collins tells me. My heart sinks. There is dead silence. I lay in a hospital bed surrounded by my mom, brother, and best friend. I observe everyone's faces. Chloe looks worried. She looks around the room, not knowing what to do. On the other side of this small, white room stands my mom. I think she feels the same way I do. As for Jack, I'm not sure if he's taking this seriously now, but I know that deep down inside of him, he is scared, too. He stands there looking a bit bored, but I know he is scared. He is wearing a Yankees baseball, Yankees shirt, and shorts.

All I can remember is my last couple of turns in dance class and then falling hard on my left leg. The next thing I knew, I woke up in a hospital bed. My leg is in a big, bulky, white cast. My dirty blond hair is combed back into a messy bun stacked up on two pillows. I am covered by white sheets and a white blanket. Surrounding me are "feel better" balloons, care packages from our neighbors, and a TV, playing movies for four year olds. I want to cry.

Finally, I break the silence.

"B-b-b-u-t," I stutter, "What about dance?" I ask my mom.

"Honey, I'm sorry, but until your leg heals, there will be no dancing."

"WHAT?" I wail. "But, Mom," I start to whine

"Whatever is best for your leg is what we are going to do. Even if it means not dancing," my mom explains.

I sigh. Dancing is my passion. I have been doing it since I was two. Dance is the only time I can get away from all the drama, all of the work, Believe, 6-8, p.2 and all of the stress. I can go in that studio, and just do

what I love to do. When I dance, I am filled with so many wonderful feelings: Happiness, joy, gracefulness, blissfulness. When I dance, I am like a graceful swan.

But according to my mom, I won't be doing it for a long time; no classes, no performances, no ballet, no jazz, and no tap. I won't be able to look forward to a great three hours after school on Tuesdays and Fridays. I will be at home aching in pain, feeling miserable because I'll be wishing I was dancing.

I don't know what to say now. I can't argue with my mom because there is no way I can dance with this big cast on my leg.

"May, I want you to stay at the hospital for one more night, and I will check in on you tomorrow around 10:30. Please take things easy on your foot, and try to rest a little bit," Dr Collins says.

"Thanks, Dr. Collins," I mumble.

He quietly closes the door behind him.

I feel like falling right asleep.

"May," my mom says. "I'll stay with you for the night, and tomorrow we'll go back home."

"May I stay too, Mrs. Anderson?" Chloe asks. I am hoping my mom will say yes. I want Chloe to be there with me. Just like she has been with everything else.

Chloe has been my best friend since preschool. We have gone through everything together—graduations, fights, field trips, anything you can possibly think of. We have supported each other through everything, been there for each other, had a shoulder to cry on, and had someone to lean on. One thing we can share is dance. Chloe and I have always done the same classes, practiced whenever we could, and have had great memories from dance.

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Both Chloe's dad and my dad have had to leave us to go fight for the army. Chloe and I now have something we can both relate to, talk about, and feel proud of.

My dad is my best friend, and he is always my hero. Since my dad left, life has been very tough for my mom, Jack and me. My mom has had to handle us on her own, take us where we need to go, and be there for us. She has done a great job of doing that. I think that Jack and I have handled it pretty well considering I am only 14 and he's 15. We write letters and video chat with my dad as often as we can. We do miss him a lot, but we have to be strong. We know that he is helping our country, and we are proud of him.

Chloe

Mrs. Anderson agreed to let me stay the night at the hospital with her and May. The doctor said that May would have to be on crutches for 4 weeks! I feel so bad for May. It will be very hard for her. She won't be able to dance for a long time. I'm not even sure I want to dance if she won't be there. Dance is what we do together as friends, and it won't be the same without her.

"Girls, I think we should all get to bed. It's already 10:30," Mrs. Anderson announces. I walk around the tiny little room. "Mrs. Anderson, what are we supposed to sleep on?" I ask.

"I actually don't know," she replies. "Here... let me see," she says as she opens a closet. "Oh great! Some cots!" Mrs. Anderson says excitedly.

I crawl into my sleeping bag, exhausted from this crazy day.

"I feel bad being so comfortable up here when you guys have to sleep on the floor!" May says.

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"It's only for the night, and I don't really mind," I say in a low voice.

"Good night, girls," Mrs. Anderson whispers.

"Good night," I mumble.

We hear nothing from May because she is asleep. As I lay in bed I think about the crazy day we have had. I also think

about my dad. He is probably in his bed right now just like me. I hope he is thinking of me just as I am thinking of him.

Katie

I flip over to see what time it is. 10:20, the clock says. I see my daughter and her friend talking away.

"Girls, Dr. Collins should be coming any minute. OK?" I confront them.

"Yeah," they say as they continue looking at their magazine.

CREEK! We hear the old door open as Dr. Collins steps in.

"How are you feeling May?" he asks her.

"A lot better than yesterday," she replies. We wait in silence as he looks around at May's leg and jots down some notes

"Well," Dr. Collins starts. We are all nervous. "It's good news!" A sigh of relief passes by. "You can go home today!!" he says cheerfully.

"YAY!!" May and Chloe scream. I am so happy. And I know May is, too. "But May," Dr. Collins starts, "You need to take things easy and take these pills every day for pain."

"Totally," May agrees. "Thanks so much, Dr. Collins!"

"You are so welcome," he replies, as he leaves the room and shuts the door behind him.

"Alright. Girls, make sure everything you borrowed is put back where you found it and grab all of your things. We are officially going home."

I can see that the girls are so excited, but I hope May realizes that

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she has to let her leg heal.

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We open the door to our cozy apartment and May hops in with her crutches looking so happy to be home. Chloe helps

her get up to her room and into her bed. I am dazed when I start to think about my husband. Fighting for our country right this very second. I miss him. And I know that May and Jack miss him as well.

"Mrs. Anderson, my mom is coming to pick me up now." she says walking back down the stairs. "I think that May should rest." Chloe says.

"That's a great idea. Thank you so much for helping out Chloe. We really appreciate it" I reply.

"Bye, May! Feel better!" Chloe shouts up.

"Thanks! See you later!" May shouts back.

After Chloe leaves, Jack's friend drops him off back home.

"How is May doing?" he asks.

"She's OK. We just came home from the hospital and Chloe just left. I'm going to go check on May. Grab yourself a snack Jack, OK?"

"Yup," he replies, already heading for the kitchen. I walk upstairs to check on May, only to see her fast asleep in her bed.

2 weeks later

May

I lay in my bed feeling lazy. I have now been on crutches for about two weeks. The pills have been helping a lot, but all of this stinks. I miss dance so much. I feel so lonely and bored after school because I can't dance or do anything else.

"Can you come up here, please?" I yell to my mom.

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"Yes honey, what do you need," she replies.

My mom comes up to my room.

"Yes?" she asks as she walks over to my bed.

"I can't do this anymore. I miss dance so much mom. You would understand. This happened to you too, mom. I just feel like I can't do anything at this point. I want to dance, I

want to mom!" My mom stops me.

"May. You need to calm down! It will take time for your leg to heal, and as your dad always says, you have to believe in yourself to get through something. If you don't, you won't get any closer to making it happen.' May, I know this is hard for you, but just think about your dad and how proud he is of you right now for everything you have gone through in the past. If you made it through him leaving us, you can do this. I believe you can. And that is coming straight from my heart."

I stare at my mom in astonishment. She and my dad are right. I have to believe in myself to get any closer to recovering and dealing with having crutches. I have to believe in myself to get back to where I was in my dance level before. But most of all, I have to believe in myself to make my dreams of being a dancer come true.