

Candidate 3 evidence

Ballet: Behind the Curtains

Dance had always been a dream of mine from such a young age. I remember pretending I was in my own little tutu prancing around the living room. But it was only when I finally decided to start dancing that I realised just how mentally and physically painful it was, not just the gorgeously free side everyone can see. It's safe to say it's a lot harder than I ever thought it could be and not many people realise that part of dance, so I am going to take you through my ballet journey and help you understand the harsh truth of my first hand experiences of my failed success.

It all started when I was about 10. I watched a tv series about dance called The Next Step and one character Richelle, played by Briar Nolet, really stood out to me. It was just something about how she executed all her movements that really had me in a spell. It was just in that moment that something clicked inside of me that said "I'm going to be a dancer!"

I begged my mum for ages before she applied for my position in the dance school of my dreams, I was overjoyed when I got accepted. I could finally start dancing! There I was, wearing a gorgeous navy blue leotard, light pink tights and pink ballet flats.

As I walked into the class, I felt excited but also sick to my stomach. Then I heard my teacher, Miss Holly saying "Time for your Plié exercise!" I had no clue what to do. I just stood there with my hands gently placed onto the barre. Miss Holly comes up to me and demonstrates how to do them, as it was my first ballet class and I did appreciate the help but I felt like I was being babied. I'm a quick learner and I prefer to be independent because I am such a perfectionist. It bothered me and made me feel embarrassed that my new teacher was just watching, correcting and repositioning almost everything, from my feet making sure they were always turned out, to my arms making sure I held them in an exact position at every movement change. It's safe to say ballet wasn't going to be as easy or as understandable as I had thought.

Once the class was over I spoke to my mum and then I heard "Oh hi there!" I immediately turn around to see Miss Holly. She starts walking up to my mum and to my complete shock says "Your daughter is wonderful. She is showing great potential already." I couldn't believe it, my first ever lesson and I was already showing great talent. And just like that I was ready to fully commit.

So I went to all the classes and I was determined to learn the dance terminology and make my dancing perfect.

I did well and began the Grade 3 classes. It was challenging at first but I worked hard, hard enough to get the opportunity to do my Grade 3 exam and of course I took it. Ballet was going well and my ego was high.

Everything was going perfectly until one evening that knocked my confidence and made me rethink my dancing altogether.

It was during the middle of class, we were about to do a Posé exercise. Miss Holly said "Exam girls to the front." In our minds we were all doing the exam, did this mean some of us would be rejected? But the moment she started saying to each of us "yes" or "no" made my heart skip a beat. She said "Yes" to a few girls who absolutely deserved it. But then she said "No" to other girls who were also ready for it.

Eventually she got to me and said "You're not doing it." I had to take a second to process what she said to me. How on earth was I not doing it, I had put so much effort into dance for nothing?

I had to put on a brave face and continue with the exercise. But I couldn't do it. I tripped over my feet and completely messed up the Posé's, how humiliating! But I had to suck it up and continue like I never missed a beat.

Once the class was over I went home and overthought all the possible reasons I wasn't doing the exam but nothing made sense.

The next class comes around and I am ready to prove to Miss Holly that I can do it. But it was almost like I wasn't even there. I had to make myself seen. She noticed my efforts and praised me for it. At the end of the lesson she asked to talk separately with me and offered me the exam for the following year.

Fast forward through training and a lot of practice at home, I thought about why I was let down in the first place, I was almost glad I had been, because if not I wouldn't be working to prove my worth every lesson. I would still have this alter ego telling me I'm the best and I am on the top of the world. I am a firm believer that everything happens for a reason, and I was let down for a reason.

Because of this setback, I could not be more happy with how things are going for me now: I have just started four new classes, contemporary, commercial, modern and tap. Not to mention I have a show too (with a solo!).

I love doing other dance styles because it gives me a chance to express myself in other ways. With contemporary I can do free flowing movements, unlike ballet where there is a right and wrong. With commercial it's fun and upbeat, modern is vibrant and tap is entertaining and really satisfying to make clicking noises on the floor.

My dance journey started with ballet. Although I do other styles, ballet will always be my background. I am glad that I had this failure because I wouldn't have become a stronger dancer. It was hard for me to be disappointed but it needed to happen and now I'm happy. I can honestly say that I can't wait for what is to come for my dance career in the future, but whatever it is I am ready.