



Out of Step: A Life in Ballet

Alida Belair

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'You have a child prodigy, Mrs Glasbeek.' With these words Madame Xenia Borovansky sealed Alida Belair's destiny in the world of ballet. Three years later, at the age of eleven, Alida became a celebrity in her role as Clara in the Borovansky Ballet's production of the Nutcracker Suite. This is the story of a gifted young ballerina's determination to perfect her art - a determination that took Alida from Melbourne to the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow, and on to leading roles with prestigious companies in London and New York. It is also the story of a vulnerable young girl's struggle to come to terms with the disappointment of being no longer the child prodigy, and her search to reconcile her physically demanding art with her emotional needs and intellectual development. A protracted battle against anorexia, the loneliness of living out of a suitcase, and the growing realization that there is a world outside the cloisters of the ballet, all set Alida on a collision course with the strange, mute art form to which she sacrificed so much.

With her satirical eye and human warmth, Alida brings to life a host of characters in a most extraordinary world. Hilarious and moving by turns, this is an unforgettable book.

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