

## Final Bow

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### Summary

Our play takes place in the suburbs of New York in modern times. The two main characters are Olivia and her mom, Carol. Olivia is a very talented young girl who does many things such as play multiple instruments, dance ballet, and get straight A's at school. She does all this stuff but it still isn't enough for her judging mother who drives Olivia to extremes to become even more perfect than she already is. Olivia's mom feels the need to push Olivia as far as possible and do the things she never could and stops at nothing to make the perfect daughter. After finding out the date of Olivia's solo performance, Carol makes her take diet pills to change her figure. Despite her daughter telling her that she doesn't need to do all these things Carol ignores her to the point of Olivia causing herself to overdose on diet pills and collapse in the middle of the stage during her performance. Olivia dies mid-stage during her solo performance and her mother is forced to live with the fact that her daughter is gone forever. The stories main message is that you don't need to be perfect and that you're fine the way you are.

### Prologue

*(Lights go up)*

*(Mother and Olivia, wearing pink ballerina outfit, enter kitchen setting, table and three chairs)*

*(Mother is clearly mad while Olivia is upset, Mother stops mid-table, Olivia keeps walking until Mother sets purse on table loudly)*

**Olivia:** *(Faces mom)* Mother I- *(Mom interrupts her)*

**Mother:** Don't want to hear it, Olivia.

**Olivia:** But Mother I was just- I'm-*(interrupted again)*

**Mother:** *(Carol finishes Olivia's sentence)* Going to make up for how poorly you did today. A full so far life of ballet classes and you're still making rookie mistakes.

**Olivia:** But my instructor said I did very well today.

**Mother:** *(Points finger at Olivia)* Your instructor is not your mother. *(Points finger at self)* I know best. Do you think I ever made simple mistakes like that when I danced? I did not.

You know what, I will make a call so you can have an extra lesson this week. Maybe we can cancel one of those music lessons you seem to always have. *(Begins to look through purse)*

**Olivia:** *(Olivia sits down, slumps in seat and mumbles under her breath)* I'm tired.

**Mother:** What was that?

**Olivia:** *(Sits up)* None of the other girls have as many lessons as me. I have a lot of homework to do. When you danced didn't you ever get tired? I would like to at least try and maybe take a break? Just this week. Please?

**Mother:** *(Looks at Olivia)* Olivia, perfection does not take *breaks*. Which is how it doesn't make mistakes. Which is what you did today. Those other girls wish they had a mother like me to tell them when they need practice. *(Mother pulls out phone and starts dialing)*

**Olivia:** Mother *please*.

**Mother:** (*Looks up from phone*) (*in nicer tone*) Olivia this is something you need, you'll have to make do with your time. Practice makes perfect

**Olivia:** (*nods head understandingly*)

**Mother:** (*Starts talking into phone*) Hi yes this is Carol again (*takes purse and walks off stage leaving Olivia alone*)

**Olivia:** She's right it's something I need, I should listen to her she knows more about ballet than I do. I have to do well for me *and* her, I just wish I could dance well enough for her.

**Mother:** (*Yells from off stage*) Olivia, there's a spot open for a private lesson, come grab your things and let's go.

**Olivia:** (*stands up from chair*) Coming. (*walks off stage*)  
(*Lights go off*)

## **Parados**

(*Table and chairs moved off stage*)

(*Lights come up 3 or 4 girls in ballerina costumes come on stage*)

(*Lines alternated between girls*)

**Ballerina #1:** Mother dear, oh how she loved to put on a show  
Until one day an accident caused her final bow (*Chorus bows*)

**Ballerina #2:** Then along came a second chance  
One she named Olivia

**Ballerina #4:** Trust with Mother once aligned  
but one slip (*Chorus falls*) and it was all gone (*Chorus stands up*)

**Ballerina #1:** Oh always dressed in pink (*They all cursty*)

A smile, was so lovely, they used to say  
Now delicate as a flower, and sad as one wilted  
Grace only exists when she dances

**Ballerina #2:** Music, friends, or school  
could not get in the way of true passion  
But who's is it really they all ask

**Ballerina #3:** All that is wanted is time  
To be a real girl to, to learn how to shine  
outside of this life, that doesn't belong

A love of dancing, passed on from her mother

**Ballerina #4:** A natural talent, fun it used to be  
Now lessons and practice five times a week.

**Ballerina #1:** Very good, very well, excellent, they all claim  
But only mother can have the *final* say

**Ballerina #2:** To make her happy to maker her proud  
Perfection, and nothing less

But it only causes pressure, to her poor heart

**Ballerina #3** Standing up for herself, once or twice caused friction

Mother why, Mother please?  
Never works, never has  
Only adds more hours to her mother's never ending needs  
**All Chorus:** Poor Olivia always dressed in pink

*(Lights go off, all walk off stage in a straight line)*

## Scene 1

*(Lights up, music is playing, ballet class setting, mirrors and ballet barre, Olivia is mid lesson mother is sitting in a chair in the corner while Olivia is practicing with instructor.)*

**Instructor:** *(has hands over head and legs crossed, Olivia is in same position)* Very good Olivia, great job.

**Mom:** *(watching intently)* Olivia your posture, watch your posture.  
*(Olivia stands up straighter)*

**Instructor:** *(starts walking around Olivia)* Thank you Carol, but I'm the one teaching.

**Mom:** Well as her mother, I believe my opinion matters too

**Instructor:** *(stops walking)* Well as her *instructor* I think I have more insight than you do

**Mom:** *(points finger at instructor)* I'll have you know I danced ballet for many years and- *(Olivia interrupts)*

**Olivia:** *(puts hands down, in normal standing position)* Mother stop, please. I'll do better ok? Just don't start a fight with my instructor, again.

**Mother:** You know very well that last one had it coming. *(crosses legs)*  
*(Olivia groans and looks back at instructor)*

**Instructor:** It's alright Olivia, we're just about done here now. I would like to speak to you, and your Mother about some exciting news.

**Mother:** Better make it quick she wants to get home and practice the piano.

**Instructor:** *(puts hand on Olivia's shoulder, looks at Mother)* Well, I've been noticing how well Olivia's been doing during lessons and we have that big performance coming up soon, I was thinking that Olivia would be perfect as the soloist.

**Olivia:** Perfect? *(has a surprised look on her face and looks at Mother expectantly)*

**Mother:** *(Stands up from chair)* Oh that's wonderful news! Goodness we've been working so hard. *(looks down, thinking)* We're going to have to cancel some things, have longer lessons, more time to dance will mean less time for music. And you'll need a new leotard.

**Instructor:** *(lets go of Olivia's shoulder, starts shaking her head)* Carol that won't be necessary, of course *we* will be choosing the outfits, but we'll make sure to run it by you beforehand. Don't want a repeat of that christmas performance.

**Mother:** Those Santa hats were *(holds head)* horrendous, you didn't expect me to let that happen?

**Olivia:** *(shakes head)* Mother please let him talk

**Instructor:** Don't worry Olivia that's all I had to say. *(looks at Mother)* But Carol I will be the one scheduling lessons, I will call you for extra practices as well.

**Mother:** We'll see. *(Starts walking)* Alright if that is all we might still have time to make it to your cello lesson. *(Stops)* Come Olivia.

**Olivia:** Yes mother. *(Walks to mom)*

**Instructor:** Excellent work today Olivia, I'm sure we made the right choice. *(Waves goodbye)*  
*(Olivia turns to wave but Mother turns her around. They both walk off stage. Lights off)*

### **Chorus 1**

*(Lights up, chorus is sitting crossed legged on stage)*

*(Chorus always looks at who is talking)*

*(lights off rest of chorus stands up they all walk off stage)*

**Ballerina #1:** It's time to shine, this is the bottom line

**Ballerina #2:** A chance has come to take the stage

**Ballerina #3:** To come out from under the shadow, that always seems to follow

**Ballerina #4:** One that can be seen in the night

**Ballerina #1:** An overbearing mother may think she knows best

**Ballerina #2:** But she is blind to anything but her own desires, blind as the shadow hides the truth

**Ballerina #3:** A parent always hovering, pushing, interfering

**Ballerina #4:** Never letting them live their own lives

**Ballerina #1:** For they live through them, finally getting what they want,  
being the person they never got to be

**Ballerina #2:** But where is the worth in this premade life?

**Ballerina #3:** Beautiful from the outside looking in, but who really knows what is going on?

**Ballerina #4:** Only the ones who never had their chance, their chance to be who they really are

**Ballerina #1:** Once all grown up and in shame then the cycle starts again, repeating until there is  
nothing left

**Ballerina #2:** Is there a light bright enough to hide the shadow?

Is there something greater to break the desire?

**Ballerina #3:** Is there a hope big enough to have? Or when is a time where things are too late?

**Ballerina #4:** Is there a time to start a new? Will there be enough to fix,  
or will the pieces inside be too broken to find?

**Ballerina #1:** More than *that one girl*, more than her mother, more than just who she is on the outside

**Ballerina #2:** But no time to show, no one can know, for there is much to do and so little time.

**Ballerina #3:** But I see, I see that light, the one that can shine enough for the blind

**Ballerina #4:** Not helpful, not your dream, the light will help you see, as long as you let me

*(Lights off chorus walks off stage)*

### **Scene 2**

*(Lights up, ballet class setting, Olivia and Chorus members are all in a line listening to the instructor)*

**Instructor:** Alright ladies thanks you for coming to this open class. I see some fresh faces as well as some familiar ones (looks at Olivia) Now if you'll all- *(Cut off)*

**Mother:** *(Off stage)* **WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU HAVEN'T PICKED THE OUTFITS YET?**  
*(everyone startles and looks back, Olivia covers her face)*

**Instructor:** *(notices Olivia's reaction)* Take 5 girls, I need to check something before we start.  
*(walks off stage)*

*(All the girls gather in a circle and start talking, except Olivia and Ballerina #4)*

*(Olivia looks around and decides to start stretching, Ballerina #4 sees her and walks over)*

**Ballerina #4/Autumn:** Hi, mind if I stretch with you?

**Olivia:** *(stops stretching and looks at her taken back)* Go ahead

*(they both start stretching facing away from each other)*

**Autumn:** *(faces Olivia)* My name is Autumn by the way, it's my first time at this dance studio.

**Olivia:** Oh, I'm Olivia. I've been coming here for.. *(pauses for a split second)*..like ever.

**Autumn:** *(laughs)* That's cool, I've heard about you actually, they really like to talk about you Olivia.

**Olivia:** *(stands up straight and starts smoothing out skirt)* *(starts talking quickly)* T-talk, what do they say exactly? Is it about my Mother because I know she's a little *(makes hand gesture)* but I mean I think she knows what she's talking about and-

**Autumn:** *(stops stretching, confused)* No that's not what they say, why would they talk about your Mother?

**Olivia:** Oh, I don't know, *(shakes head)* nevermind. *(starts stretching again)* I know they say things, but I don't actually know what they say.

**Autumn:** *(starts stretching again too)* They talk about how amazing you are. I heard people have left because they knew they couldn't compete with you.

*(Mother and Instructor come out on stage, Mother is holding a piece of fabric while the instructor is walking behind her)*

**Mother:** Olivia come here.

*(Olivia stands up and walks over to Mother glancing back at Autumn who is now walking towards other girls)*

**Mother:** *(in hushed tone)* Look at this disgraceful fabric! They expect you to wear it, they actually expect you to go out and perform in front of people in it! I want you to look your best, do you think you'd look your best in *this*?

**Olivia:** I don't know, maybe? I mean it's just the fabric, not even the whole outfit.

**Mother:** Olivia this will make the outfits too tight, it just won't look right on you, please tell the instructor you would rather wear one of those horrible Santa hats from a year ago than something made from this.

**Autumn:** *(starts walking towards Olivia and Mom)* Hey Olivia, the girls *(points to girls)* and I are having trouble with a position, can you help us?

**Mother:** I'm sorry, Olivia and I are having a discussion.

**Autumn:** Oh I'm sorry, about what?

*(mother looks as if she is about to talk but Olivia does before her)*

**Olivia:** Autumn what do you think of this fabric? *(takes fabric from mother and hands it to Autumn)*

**Autumn:** Well I think it's pretty, and it feels nice.

**Olivia:** I thought so too. *(looks at Mother)*

**Mother:** *(grabs fabric from Autumn)* *(looks at Olivia, tone not nice but not too harsh)* Is this really what you want? The fabric store I know is having a sale and I was going to go down there during your lesson.

**Olivia:** Mother if the instructor thinks it okay, and I think it's okay and so does Autumn, I think I'll be okay.

**Instructor:** Thank you Olivia, now if we're all clear on the fabric choice here we should start the lesson.

*(Mother walks off stage)*

**Instructor:** All right girls *(claps hands)* first positions!

*(all girls get in a line, lights off)*

## **Chorus 2**

*(Lights up, 3 out of the 4 chorus members are on stage, they all watch as Autumn/Ballerina #4 runs on stage)*

**Ballerina #1:** Times are dark, and time is short, there's much to do, and no time to start

**Ballerina #2:** A light has come to help

**Ballerina #3:** The voice will move quick, make sure the lost doesn't fall

**Autumn:** Fall deeper into what they didn't know, fall on to the cycle and start it again

**Ballerina #1:** One will have the chance, the chance to go as they are

**Ballerina #2:** But how much of you can you be when you feel like no one wants you to

**Ballerina #3:** They see only the outside, and forget there is an inside.

They forget what they are doing, they only want the best

**Autumn:** But is it for you? Sadly it's unknown. The unknown motive of actions, is it love? is it desire?

**Ballerina #1:** Is it out of spite of too many bad signs?

**Ballerina #2:** Not yours, not yours to control, a wonderful gift that doesn't belong to you anymore.

**Ballerina #3:** You can lace it in a bow, and make it pretty.

But the inside is not for you, not yours to keep.

**Autumn:** No matter how many times you you change the outside, the inside will remain.

**Ballerina #1:** Remaining who you are, something that isn't easy, something that should be encouraged

**Ballerina #2:** But is not always welcome. That is when they start hide, hide who they are, even though the outside doesn't show any flaw

**Ballerina #3:** The shadow hovers and covers until even you cannot see who you used be

*(lights off, all chorus walks off stage)*