

START READING AN EXCLUSIVE EXCERPT FROM

THE SPECTACULAR

MARION'S HEAD FELT LIKE IT MIGHT EXPLODE FROM EVERYTHING SHE HAD TO REMEMBER: *chaîné* and *piqué* turns, more fan kicks, and then on to the tap and jazz combinations. Every fifteen minutes, Mr. Markert pointed to a few of the dancers and asked them to step to the side, which they did, teary-eyed. The group became smaller and smaller, until only sixty were left.

Including Vanessa and Marion.

Marion was amazed she'd reached this far, but her legs were shaky and her heart was pumping madly. They were shown a kick and turn combo, then brought up to the front of the room one at a time to perform alone.

Vanessa strode to the center of her room when her number was called, a huge smile on her face. The music began, and she did the choreography perfectly, her kicks hitting eye-height, exactly as they'd been directed. But on the final piano kick, she caught her heel on the side of her other shoe. It was a tiny bobble, hardly noticeable, but she grimaced before catching herself and smiling wide once more.

Hopefully they hadn't noticed, but several of the judges wrote something down on their pads as Vanessa ran back to her spot. She didn't meet Marion's eye as she passed by.

"Next up, number 310."

Marion walked to the front of the room.

