

THE DANCER

by
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There once was a young girl named Annabelle who had always wanted to be a dancer. When she was five years old, she saw her first ballet. From then on, she wanted to be a world famous ballerina. Every day Annabelle would dance and spin. She loved to dance.

Sometimes she would dress up in her dance costume and do a show for people in her yard. She loved to dance for people, and it made them very happy. She would just dance and dance and dance.

When she turned seven, her mother put her into dance classes. Her first day was the best day of her life. She enjoyed seeing herself dancing in the big mirror along the wall.

The first class she attended had twelve other girls her age. The teacher saw that Annabelle was much better than the other girls in her class were, so she promoted her to the next level. Soon she was in the highest class of all. She loved to dance, and she loved her dance teacher.

Every year the dance school put on a performance so the girls could show what they had learned to their parents and family members. They would practice for hours learning all of the steps. It was easy for Annabelle. She helped the other girls learn the

dances as well. She wanted the dances to be just perfect.

Two weeks before each performance, the girls and their parents went to the dressmaker to pick out the dresses. The dressmaker showed them some of the dresses she had made in the past. The girls were very impressed. There were many different colors and styles.

Annabelle loved to pick out the colors, and she helped to design the dresses. The other girls always liked her choices.

Annabelle liked all of the dance styles her teacher taught. There was jazz, tap, modern, and of course her favorite ballet. She wanted to be in every show, but her teacher made her choose only two. Annabelle always chose ballet, and she was the lead ballerina. She also chose jazz dance because it was so much fun.

Each year the teacher would give out a special award to the best dancer. Annabelle was always the winner. The other girls were very proud of her. Annabelle always had a smile on her face. She was always so friendly. It was hard for them to be jealous.

Annabelle had a special place in her bedroom for all of her awards. Her father had built shelves for all of her trophies.

When Annabelle was fifteen years old, she was asked to join a very special troupe of dancers in the city. The director of the dance studio had heard about Annabelle, and had gone to watch her at her last recital.

Afterward he called her mother and said that he wanted her to audition for his class. If she were good enough he would find work for her as a professional. Annabelle and her mother were so excited. This is what she had always dreamed about.

On the day of the audition, Annabelle and her mother were in their car going to the dance studio, when a big truck went through a red light at an intersection and hit their car on her mother's side.

The car turned over and over as the truck pushed it. When the vehicles came to a stop, their car was under the truck.

It took several hours to pull the truck off the car. Then it took another hour to get

Annabelle and her mother out of their car.

They were both unconscious and bleeding. The medical people put them in an ambulance and took them to the hospital.

It was three days before Annabelle woke up. She had a bad headache, and her body hurt all over. She asked the nurse what had happened. The nurse went to get the doctor.

When the doctor came to her room, he told her about the accident. Annabelle had broken her right arm and her left leg, but she would be all right. It would be a couple of months before she would be able to start dancing again. The doctor was not sure if she would be able to dance as well as she had before; only time would tell.

Annabelle asked about her mother. The doctor told her that her mother had died in the accident. She died in the ambulance on the way to the hospital. Annabelle was devastated. Her mother was her very best friend, and now she was gone.

Later that day her father came to see her. He was sad as well because he had lost his wife. Annabelle and her father cried together.

Annabelle's recovery from her injuries went fast, but her attitude was not good. She did not want to do anything. She just stayed in her bed all day long. She did not want to dance. She did not want to go to school. She did not want to see her friends. She just wanted to be left alone.

For two months, Annabelle stayed in her room and slept most of the time. She was so depressed that even her father could not make her to get out of her bed.

One day her father got an idea. He called the manager of the dance studio. The director came to the house and visited with Annabelle. He tried to convince her to start practicing again, but she refused. She rolled away from him and told him to go away.

The next day her father decided he needed to do something serious to get her up. He went into Annabelle's room, opened the curtains on her window, pulled back the blanket from her bed, and ordered her to get up. She just rolled over and hugged her pillow. He went to the bathroom and filled a glass with water. He took it to her room, and then threw the water all over her.

Annabelle screamed, “Why did you do that? Leave me alone!”

Her father just smiled as he went to get more water. Annabelle jumped up, ran into the bathroom, and locked the door. Her father took all of the bedding off her bed, and then took the mattress out of her room.

When Annabelle finally came out of the bathroom, she screamed again, “Where’s my bed!”

Her father was standing at the door and just laughed at her.

Annabelle yelled at her father, but he was laughing so hard he did not hear what she was saying. She got angry, turned, and closed the door.

A little while later, she went downstairs to the living room. She was dressed! It was the first time since the accident that she had gotten herself dressed. She ignored her father as she walked past him, and then went into the kitchen.

“Where’s my food, I’m hungry!” she yelled.

Her father just laughed. He went into the kitchen to see if he could help her. When Annabelle saw her father, she ran to him and gave him a big hug.

“I miss mom so much. Why did she have to die?” Annabelle asked her father.

Annabelle and her father hugged each other for a long time. Annabelle cried and cried. Her father held her close and stroked her hair. He was glad that she was showing her feelings.

Her father told her no one knows why people have to die when they are so young. Only God has the answer to that. He told her that he knew her mother wanted her to be a dancer, and she should do the very best she could do. Annabelle agreed.

On her first day back at dance practice, she fell down. She did not have as much strength as before. It was going to take a long time to build her muscles back up. It would take a lot of work and time until she would be able to do the things she used to do.

Annabelle practiced every day. She worked harder than any of the other students. She arrived early and left late. She wanted to be the very best that she could be. It took a few months to get her strength back.

A few weeks later, her teacher told her she was ready. She was finally ready to do the audition. Her father arranged the appointment.

It was a long ride to the audition. Her memory kept going back to the day she and her mother were going to the same place. Tears ran down her cheeks as she looked out the window of the car.

When they arrived at the studio, Annabelle had second thoughts about trying out. She was very nervous. She had never been nervous before. Dancing was so easy for her. Even though she was ready for the audition, she was afraid they would not accept her.

Annabelle and her father entered the building and followed the directions to the auditorium. There were about ten other dancers preparing for their own auditions; stretching and dancing in the hallway. They were all so good.

Annabelle went to a corner and took off her coat. She began to stretch and practice her steps. She knew she was ready.

When her name was called she walked slowly to the center of the stage. She bowed her head and said a prayer.

Then she smiled and yelled, "This is for you mom! Thank you for your faith in me!"

She began to dance as she had never danced before. She was one with the music and smiled from ear to ear as she danced not for herself but for her mom.

When she finished, the people who were watching her stood up and clapped. They had big smiles on their faces.

They accepted her into the school, and soon she became one of the lead dancers.

From then on, before each performance, Annabelle would look up and say, "Thank you mom, I'm doing this for you!"



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VOCABULARY: (*Match the word to its definition*)

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. ballerina ____ | a. drapes, window covering |
| 2. perform ____ | b. manager |
| 3. promoted ____ | c. concert, act |
| 4. performance ____ | d. where roads cross |
| 5. costume ____ | e. woman ballet dancer |
| 6. agent ____ | f. tryout. test |
| 7. intersection ____ | g. clothes for an occasion |
| 8. audition ____ | h. hospital vehicle |
| 9. ambulance ____ | i. moved to the next level |
| 10. curtains ____ | j. do before an audience |

TRUE / FALSE:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Annabelle loved to dance. | T / F |
| 2. Annabelle's mother survived the crash. | T / F |
| 3. Annabelle's father threw ice cream on her. | T / F |
| 4. Annabelle liked to dance all of the dances. | T / F |
| 5. The director of the dance studio came to see Annabelle. | T / F |
| 6. A train hit Annabelle's car. | T / F |
| 7. Annabelle won many awards. | T / F |
| 8. Annabelle went back to school after leaving the hospital. | T / F |
| 9. Annabelle's classmates did not like her. | T / F |
| 10. Annabelle liked to design costumes. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE:

1. What happened to Annabelle's mother? _____
 - a) She was hit by a truck
 - b) She had a heart attack
 - c) She moved to another city
 - d) She fell and hurt herself

2. Why did Annabelle stop dancing? _____
 - a) She became bored
 - b) She got sick
 - c) She was in an accident
 - d) Her teacher said she should quit

3. What did Annabelle's father do to her to get her out of bed? _____
 - a) He pushed her out of her bed.
 - b) He yelled "Fire!"
 - c) He threw water on her
 - d) He gave her ice cream

4. What did Annabelle say before her audition? _____
 - a) "This is for you teacher."
 - b) "I love you dad"
 - c) "Thank you mom, I'm doing this for you!"
 - d) "I miss you mom"

COMPREHENSION: *(Write a complete sentence to answer the question.)*

1. What award did Annabelle win every year?

2. Who made Annabelle get out of her bed?

3. What happened to Annabelle's mother?

4. How long did it take to get Annabelle out of her car?

5. What were Annabelle's injuries after the accident?

6. Where did Annabelle go after her father threw water on her?

7. Who visited Annabelle in her home?

8. Why was Annabelle sad and depressed?

9. Why was Annabelle afraid to do the audition?

10. Who did Annabelle thank for helping her to become a great dancer?
