

Like Water

For the first time, she walks onto the stage in her full costume, ready for her only run-through before the show tonight. She tests the supports and padding in her pointe shoes, and she feels just the right amount of pain in her toes when she applies pressure. She kneels down and arranges her flowing white skirt, facing the back curtain and ready to begin. The speakers begin her music softly with light chords, and the girl floats her arms up with each beat. She gracefully rises to her feet as the music strengthens. After a quick turn to face the audience, she goes immediately into her choreography. Two graceful steps to the right, a chasse into an arabesque; she elongates her right arm forward and left arm and leg back into one smooth line pointing toward the right front corner of the stage. Leading into a preparation, she does a small turn on her full pointes and holds herself up while she waits for the next musical phrase to begin. She lets her weight fall onto her right leg, which begins her next step across the stage, leading into another turn. Another arabesque and she hunches over slightly as she draws back while the music seems to sigh. The musical phrase repeats, so she repeats the same steps, this time starting toward the left.

Now the music enters the bridge section of the piece, and she runs elegantly to the right back corner of the stage. Her next step involves piqué-ing across the stage; she throws her weight onto her supporting leg while she brings her other toe to the supporting knee. After the first two, she does a turn with her other leg behind her, similar to the position of a ballerina turning in a music box. The music intensifies, and she performs one of her favorite steps, the pas-de-basque. She leaps onto her right foot, brushes her left foot past her right ankle before transferring her weight to it, then brings her right foot in behind her; now she is ready to repeat the step to the left. Approaching the climax of the piece, she does a series of leaps to the center of the stage, followed by a series of different turns as the music continues to build, finishing with a double pirouette.

The music restates its original theme as she finishes the pirouette, and she goes immediately into another pose, but instead of a turn like earlier, she does a preparation and tour jetté, another favorite move. Starting out facing the front of the stage, she quickly builds up some momentum moving backwards, and she faces the left corner of the stage with her body. Continuing with the turning motion, she kicks up her right leg to the back left corner and raises her rounded arms above her head. She lands

on her right foot facing the front of the stage while her left leg is elongated in an arabesque. For fun, she does a few more pas de basques around the stage before the music's finale. She curtseys widely to the right and left, then ballet-runs off the stage.

"Great, Alice!" say a few voices from the audience. Alice walks awkwardly back on stage as she scratches an itch under her hair-bun, and she places her other hand on her hip. "We have time, would you like to run it once more?" her teacher asks.

"Sure," Alice replies as she reaches down to the floor to stretch her back and legs. A few vertebra pop as she straightens up, and she bends backwards to stretch the other way as well. Regaining her dancer's posture and composure, Alice kneels down once again to perform her solo.

