

A Pause I Didn't Know I Needed

by Sophia Le

In a world that spins faster than the twirl of a dancer's skirt, I found myself rushing through every step, every leap, every beat. Ballet was my language, my breath, my heartbeat—yet sometimes, I forgot to listen to the silence between the music. Until the day I first slipped my feet into pointe shoes.

The moment was quiet, almost like the world held its breath. My toes, wrapped tightly in satin, felt strange and new, like tiny seeds ready to bloom on the tips of my feet. The studio echoed softly—the gentle creak of the wooden floor, the soft rustle of my skirt, the distant hum of the world outside.

I lifted myself slowly, inch by inch, feeling the weight shift, the delicate balance between strength and softness. It was a pause unlike any other—a stillness filled with courage and wonder. In that breathless moment, I saw not just the dancer in the mirror, but the journey that had led me here: the early mornings, the aching muscles, the countless falls and rises.

Stepping back from the whirlwind of practice and performance, I realized how much I had grown—not just in skill, but in spirit. Ballet had taught me to slow down, to listen, to feel every heartbeat and every whisper of the wind. And in that quiet, I found magic. But before that delicate moment, there was a joyful energy inside me. Days when my feet felt alive with excitement, when my muscles buzzed with strength, and my mind soared with possibilities. I danced through rehearsals, embracing the rhythm of lessons and expectations. I was chasing joy, and it felt like chasing the breeze—always uplifting and full of promise.

One afternoon, after a wonderful class, I sat on the warm floor, my breath steady and calm. The world outside the studio window shimmered with golden sunlight and gentle shadows, and inside, everything felt peaceful. For once, I wasn't thinking about the next move, the next step, or the next challenge. I was simply there, feeling the happiness, the gentle hum of my heartbeat, and the soft fabric of my skirt against my skin.

That was the pause I didn't know I needed—the moment when rushing stopped, and I finally noticed the small miracles in the joy. The way my teacher's encouraging voice lifted me, the way my friends smiled when I finally nailed a difficult step, the way my own determination blossomed with each practice.

And then came the day I first stood en pointe. The moment my toes touched the floor with that new, fragile strength, the world slowed even more. Time stretched like taffy, pulling me into a bubble of stillness and light. I could hear the faintest rustle of my breath, the soft beat of my heart against my ribs, the whisper of my satin shoes.

For a moment, nothing else existed but the quiet power of standing tall on those tiny tips of my toes. I was soaring without wings, balanced between earth and sky. The joy was still there, a bright reminder of every leap and every smile, and it was deepened by the beauty of what I had achieved—a delicate dance between strength and grace.

In that pause, I realized ballet was more than just movement. It was a meditation, a way to listen to my body and soul. It was about patience, courage, and the bravery to be still when everything inside me wanted to rush forward.

Since then, I carry that moment with me—not just in the studio, but everywhere. When life speeds up, when days blur into endless lists and noise, I remember the quiet strength of standing en pointe. I remember to slow down, to breathe, to feel the world around me.

Because in the stillness, I find myself. In the pause, I discover magic.

Sometimes, the world needs to slow down, and so do we. Sometimes, the most beautiful leaps happen when we stop rushing and simply stand—steady, strong, and ready to dance into the future.

And sometimes, all it takes is a soft step en pointe to remind us that the greatest journeys begin with a moment of quiet courage.