



It was not until after midnight that the ballet finally drew to a close. As she took her curtain calls, she heard the clamour of the audience's applause, but all she could think was, *Have I done it?* Had she danced all right? Had she missed a step? Had she done enough to make Olga well again?

Backstage, the grown-up dancers were clapping each other on the back and shaking Ivanov by the hand. Tchaikovsky hurried by clutching a sheaf of sheet music scribbled all over in his spiky black handwriting. Among the tumult, he alone paused to give her a quick nod and a smile. At least he thought she had done well, Stana realised, with relief.

