

PREFACE

The muffled, distorted sounds under water always comforted me and brought about peaceful moments where I could feel boundless, with no restraints from the real world trying to mask me—contain me. That's why I always swam through the water instead of on top for easy access to the air I needed to live. In the underworld, I felt air was not necessary and found the softened noises serene and uniquely beautiful, but there was no beauty in her dying that day...

The blue water Whit once loved now looked black because it was claiming her, taking her from me. Crash was unconscious. Blood floated from his wounds, and his shirt remained clutched in her desperate, tiny fist. I swam with a vengeance to save her. At least, that's what I believed until I saw her expression, the message in her eyes. *The ballerina's sacrifice...* I knew Whitney was choosing to die for him, *with* him.

Morning sunrays lit the way, shining a path through the blackness to my best friend, to my—giving me even more determination to reach the girl I loved and not let her succeed.

Her elegant dancer hand floated gracefully above her, following her undeniable descent until her fingers twitched as if life—hope—had somehow ignited. Whitney looked down at Crash's fingers pitifully touching hers, trying to encourage her to fight for her life because there was no beauty in her dying that day, and we both knew it.