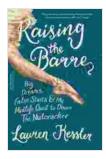
Big Dreams, False Starts, and My Midlife Quest to Dance the Nutcracker

I've always loved the Nutcracker. The music, the costumes, the story - it's all so magical. I've seen it performed countless times, and I've always dreamed of dancing in it myself.



Raising the Barre: Big Dreams, False Starts, and My Midlife Quest to Dance the Nutcracker by Lauren Kessler

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But I'm not a dancer. I never have been. I'm not particularly graceful or coordinated, and I have two left feet. But that didn't stop me from dreaming.

A few years ago, I decided to make my dream a reality. I was in my mid-40s, and I knew that if I didn't do it now, I never would. So I signed up for a ballet class.

It was harder than I thought it would be. I was sore and clumsy, and I felt like I was always a step behind the other students. But I didn't give up. I kept practicing, and slowly but surely, I started to improve. After a few months, I auditioned for a local production of the Nutcracker. I didn't get the part I wanted, but I was cast as a party guest. I was so excited!

The day of the performance, I was nervous but also thrilled. I had worked so hard to get to this point, and I was finally going to live out my dream.

The performance was amazing. I had so much fun dancing on stage, and the audience seemed to love it. It was one of the best experiences of my life.

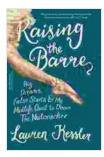
After the performance, I realized that I didn't just want to dance in the Nutcracker once. I wanted to do it again and again. So I kept taking classes, and I kept auditioning for roles.

I've been dancing in the Nutcracker for the past few years now, and I love it more every time. It's such a beautiful and magical ballet, and I'm so grateful that I get to be a part of it.

If you have a dream, don't let anything stop you from pursuing it. It doesn't matter how old you are or how much experience you have. If you work hard and never give up, you can achieve anything you set your mind to.

And who knows? You might just end up dancing in the Nutcracker one day.

Big Dreams, False Starts, and My Midlife Quest to Dance the Nutcracker is a memoir about my journey to dance the Nutcracker. It's a story about dreams, perseverance, and the power of never giving up. If you're interested in learning more about my story, please visit my website: www.mymidlifequest.com



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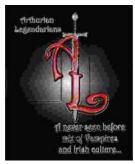
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