



DIARY OF A DOG

florence

“Spot your head in the pirouette!” “More demi-plié!” “Higher grand jeté!” I can hear the instructions in my head even before Sarah-Jane calls them out. While I understand the language of “woof,” the world of dance speaks to my soul. I am Menlowe Ballet’s beloved company canine and the studio dog of Menlo Park Academy of Dance. **I’m named after Florence Nightingale, from Menlowe Ballet’s *The Lady with the Lamp*, which pre-**

miered in the spring of 2018. However, there’s a bit of mystery surrounding my own debut. I was found in the streets, alas, with no tag or chip. I’m ever so grateful that I was brought to Tony LaRussa’s Animal Rescue Foundation (arflife.org), where Sarah-Jane and Michael “discovered” me in September 2018. My exact age isn’t known, and the best guess is that I’m a Maltese, Coton de Tuléar

and Terrier mix. Whatever the blend, my family and dance friends say I’m 12 pounds of sweet, loving, playful perfection. I sit on a special mat at the front of class (it even has my name on it!), but I also get to share the spotlight too. My resume includes more than a dozen *Nutcracker* performances, and I always get rave reviews from my fans. Wait, did you hear what Sarah-Jane just said? “Grand allegro!” The big jumps! That means class is almost over and dinner will come soon. **P**

PHOTOGRAPHY: ROBB MOST