## Quillbot, Formal:

Li Cunxin is born into a poor family located in a remote Shandong hamlet, where he is destined to work as a labourer in the fields. Li is perplexed by the brusque preliminary inspection screening in the provincial capital of Qingdao. He was first ignored, but was chosen after his instructor made a proposal during a school visit. After completing a series of physical exams, he gets admitted to the ballet school after being selected to fly to Beijing for an audition at Madame Mao's Dance Academy.

Followed by seven years of rigors instruction. As he battles to overcome his homesickness, he fails to flourish in the academy. There is no flexibility within the tight timetable, in which he must juggle several hours of dancing instruction with rigors academic classes. In addition, he fights to join the Communist youth party, enduring gruelling interviews; once accepted, he devotes additional time to meetings. However, Cunxin does not mind, since he now has a calling: serving glorious Communism. The advent of a new teacher who is less prone to yell alters his pessimistic view of dancing. He places greater focus on having fun and understanding one's own skills and flaws. Teacher Xiao observes Cunxin, detecting something that other instructors have not yet observed. Due to his passion to classical ballet, which is regarded too Western to be taught at the institution, the teacher also (dangerously) diverges from his colleagues (as opposed to the politically motivated, strident form favoured by Madame Mao). His perseverance and bravery, together with Teacher Xiao's guidance and encouragement, enable him to be at the top of the class and be granted more and more leadership responsibilities. As a result, the Academy reluctantly permits him to travel to Ben Stevenson's Houston Ballet company since a visiting student for six weeks, as the government has gradually loosened its control of Western culture as a result of positional changes.

In the United States, he begins to doubt the demands of the Chinese Communist Party that he was nurtured on. America is not packed with filthy-looking businessmen, and the sheer richness and size of the buildings and people show that China, not America, is the impoverished nation. However, he is aware that this attitude is too hazardous to express, so upon his return to China, he tones it down and recites some Communist propaganda for the report to be completed so that he may return in two months. Despite the falsehoods, the government refuses to allow him return to the United States. Three months later, he obtains his visa and leaves, this time to dance for a whole year with the Houston Ballet. He begins a covert relationship with Elizabeth Mackey, an aspiring American dancer, in order to prevent his country from discovering and sending him back. He is expeditiously elevated to soloist and given an extension of five months. In the final month, Cunxin has been hesitant to go, so he and Elizabeth hasten their wedding so that Cunxin can remain forever in the United States, so avoiding a defection that could have dire ramifications for his family. Visiting the Chinese Consulate to announce his decision while attempting to prevent the certain backlash against Stevenson, the resident Chinese diplomat forcibly detains Li in an attempt to coerce his return to China; when he continues to refuse to go willingly, the Party agrees to release him but revokes his citizenship and declares he can never return to the country of his birth. Cunxin continues to dance out of worry for his family, but his relationship with Elizabeth ends in divorce due to his youth and cultural differences.

Cunxin is rapidly elevated to principle dancer position, performing in multiple premieres and receiving prizes, but is sidelined for nearly three months due to a serious back injury. Despite the setback, he continues to dance, and shortly thereafter, after six years of separation from his family, the Chinese government let his parents to visit him in the United States. They arrive to watch him perform in The Nutcracker, sob as they are reunited, and receive a standing ovation from the audience. Li meets and marries Mary McKendry, an Australian dancer, and they eventually return to his hometown. Cunxin meets with his former teacher, Xiao, and performs for him and his parents. He feels an inexplicable amount of guilt for the vast disparity between his lifestyle and that of the rest of the village, but consoles himself by considering that he has accomplished everything his mother ever desired for him. They return to the United States and continue to dance.

Sophie, the first child of Cunxin and Mary, is born completely deaf, much to their dismay. Mary abandons her work to care for daughter, and as a result, Sophie leads a normal childhood and takes ballet courses to follow in her parents' footsteps. They have two more healthy children, but ultimately decide to go to Mary's native Australia. Romeo and Juliet, their final performance, is televised live across China to 500 million spectators. In Australia, he continues dancing but also manages one of the country's major stock brokerage businesses. He continues to visit his mother and hometown, never forgetting his origins.