FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

On the Edge
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“Elayne! Get up, right now!” It is three-thirty in the morning, but Elayne obeys automatically.

Her mother is using her coach tone. Even in Newport, Rhode Island, a Russian figure skating coach is God.

On the Edge follows the trials and triumphs of a seventeen-year-old Russian-American pairs skater who is left partnerless by a pubertal growth spurt. The author, a former competitive roller skater and a founding member of Ilia Kulik’s official fan club, meticulously describes life behind the velvet rope that separates the masses from the elite skaters they adore. This is the first of a projected series of novels.

As Elayne’s quest for true love, womanhood, and a compatible skating partner continues in Chicago, Boston, and the Sapporo Olympics, she is pulled in conflicting directions. Her mother, whose skating career was cut short by an unplanned pregnancy, see-saws between encouraging her daughter’s growing independence and thwarting it, even intercepting her mail to protect her from exploitation. Olympic champion Alexandr Klukov’s kisses and endearments melt Elayne’s conviction that “men are only good to skate with,” even as commitments, contract negotiations, and media frenzy threaten to sweep them apart. Twenty-seven-year-old Alexi Stanchev, reviled by the public for his violent abusiveness, matches Elayne’s relentless perfectionism on the ice stroke for stroke, but his drive to dominate is more than she can tolerate.

Desperate times call for desperate measures. How far will Elayne go to make her dreams come true?

Elayne’s drama unfolds with a sometimes overwhelming supporting cast of skaters, coaches, and frenetic fans locked in a dance of intrigue and gossip, all vying for prestige in the rigid hierarchy. The feeling of authenticity is augmented by the judicious use of Russian expressions, underscoring Elayne’s biological and cultural heritage. The skating sequences are written as passionately as the bedroom scenes, celebrating the magic that keeps skaters practicing, even if their ice time is at four o’clock in the morning.

Skate-crazy romance fans will devour this detailed backstage tour. Less fanatic readers who don’t know the difference between a triple toe loop and a sit spin will be painlessly

educated to a deeper appreciation of the art of skating “on the edge.”

Christine G. Richardson