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Sugar Plum Ballerinas #1: Plum Fantastic



Synopsis

Alexandrea Petrakova Johnson does not want to be a beautiful ballerina, and she does not want to leave her friends in Apple Creek. Unfortunately, that doesn't stop her ballet-crazy mother from moving them to Harlem, or from enrolling Al at the Nutcracker School of Ballet. Life is hard when you're the new ballerina on the block, and it's even harder when you're chosen to be the Sugar Plum Fairy in the school recital! Not only is Al a terrible dancer, but she's also got a rotten case of stage fright! Al's ballet classmates are going to have to use all the plum power they've got to coach this scary fairy!

Book Information

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Series: Sugar Plum Ballerinas (Book 1)

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Age Range: 1 - 9 years

Grade Level: 2 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 2–4–Alexandrea has just moved from small-town Georgia to New York City's Harlem where her mother hopes to launch a costume-making business. The nine-year-old feels like she's in another world, except that Mama is still forcing her to take ballet, even though Alex dreams of becoming a speed skater like her idol Phoebe Fitz. The first day of class is made even worse, since her mother forces her to wear a wild creation–a tutu resembling a "pink puff pastry." When Alex is randomly assigned the coveted role of Sugar Plum Fairy in the school's

summer performance, she is terrified and shunned by the other dancers. Practice doesn't help, and she seriously considers giving up the part. However, after seeing Phoebe Fitz on television talking about the importance of ballet, Alex determines to try her best. She enlists the help of other students, and as the girls progress with the dance moves, so do their friendships. Alex's voice is full of wit and determination. This fun easy chapter book develops at a good pace and creates a bit of tension and anticipation as readers follow Alex's efforts. Themes of self-confidence and the potential to achieve whatever you set your mind to are neatly woven into the story. Occasional spot art shows Alex and her new friends.

—Bethany A. Lafferty, Las Vegas-Clark County Library, NV

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Moving is never easy, but for Alexandra Petrakova Johnson, the move from a small southern town to Harlem is unbearable. Al's mother wants to try her hand at costume designs for New York City theaters, and she wants Al to become a ballet dancer—not, as Al wishes, a speed skater. Soon Al finds herself in the classroom at the Nutcracker School of Ballet, reluctantly wearing one of her mother's embarrassing creations. Al's winning personality leads her to make a few friends, but just as things seem to be getting better she courts jealousy by being cast as the Sugar Plum Fairy in the annual performance of The Nutcracker. Eventually, friendship, lots of practice, and ingenuity help Al overcome serious stage fright and clumsiness to give an unforgettable performance. Those looking for Goldberg's trademark sass and attitude will not find it here: this first book in a planned series earnestly addresses the effects of moving, making friends, and settling into a new routine. Grades 3-5.

--Bina Williams

This book was purchase for my great granddaughter for her birthday. She is 7 and can't quite read it alone. Her Nana reads it with her. But she love the book so I am happy with it as well. Especially since these girls look like her.

Very nice! I bought the book for my little niece, but she hasn't learned to read yet. I started reading it to her and was taken away myself by the story. I had to reread some of the characters a couple of times, just to distinguish who was who; but it all fit together for me quickly thereafter. The story kept a good pace and had a sweet story to tell. I plan to get all of the books for my niece, whom I'm sure when she does learn to read, will be truly delighted with

them.

Alexandrea Petrakova Johnson is not crazy about ballet, but her mother is. So much so, she has filled Alexandra's room with everything ballet. Her bedroom mirror has pink ballet shoes painted around it, she has pink ballet shoe drawer handles, the lamp, comforter and pillowcases have ballet shoes too. Her mother was so obsessed with all things ballet that she moved them to Harlem New York so that Alexandra could attend the Nutcracker School of Ballet and so that she could get a job designing costumes. Ms. Debbe, the ballet instructor, announces that there will be a drawing for the Sugar Plum Fairy dance. All the class is excited with the exception of Alexandra. She is not interested at all and feels that her chances are slim of being picked, because she has the competition of 23 other students. But as fate would have it, she is picked to be the Sugar Plum Fairy. Alexandra is worried that she won't be able to learn the routine and once on stage, she will make a complete fool of herself in front of lots of people. When she watches her favorite speed skater on television actually doing a ballet routine, she begins to have hope. She will need lots of help from her new friends at the Nutcracker school. Alexandra is having fun and bonding with her new friends, until she comes home one day to find her mother has packed them up after two months of living in New York. Goldberg has done an excellent job of introducing this wonderful story of ballet. Moving to a new town and making friends is tough for anyone. This is a quick read and a hilarious story that young girls will relate to. The back of the book has the definitions of the ballet terms used.

Perfect book included a ballerina Barbie and the choice was perfect. The little girl who received was ecstatic !

Great book in showing little melanated girls they can dance

Great gift for a little girl

Fun book for my 6 year old. She loved the familiar characters.

Perfect for my 8 year old!

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