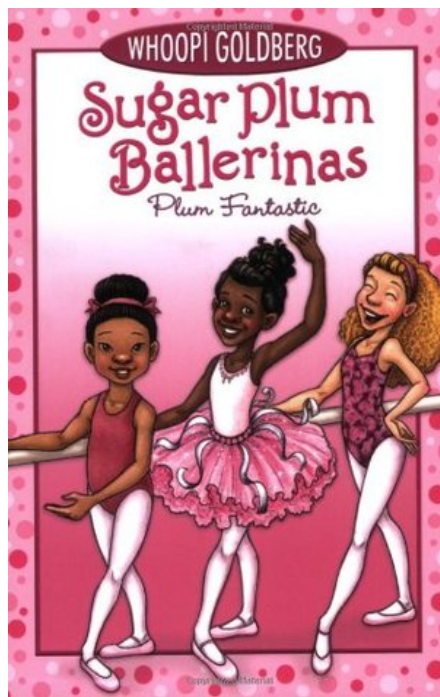




Plum Fantastic

Whoopi Goldberg , Deborah Underwood , Maryn Roos (Illustrator)

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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!

Plum Fantastic Details

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Author : Whoopi Goldberg , Deborah Underwood , Maryn Roos (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Plum Fantastic for online ebook

Valerie Jenkins says

When I first saw the book, and I saw Whoopi's name as the author, I had some doubts about this book. From the first page to the last page the book was excellent an a good read. It also gave me a glimpse about the life of a ballerina. It provided terms that a ballerina may use or come across. This story also touch on the different lifestyle of someone that had left the south and adjusting to the north. Whoopi also did a great job in describing in detail of Alexandria and her friends personalities and the level of skills in their ballerina activity. Her mom and her costume creations reminds me of a person with a dream, and does all she can do to make her dream come true. It is a book that a young girl in elementary or middle school that could identify with. It shows all the raw emotions that age group goes through when they do not want to do something. It also shows that a person can accomplished anything if they put their mind to it. The illustrations that Maryn Roos provides makes her black and white illustrations standout, and not too overwhelming. By her providing the front cover in pink gave it a princess touch to it.

Amy Holiday says

Here's my review on my writing website, amyholiday.com!

This is a cute story, relevant for grades 3-4, I think. Alexandria's mom is fun, and Al respects her, but Al is still put-upon to carry out her mother's childhood dream of being a ballerina. Even though Al wants to be a speed skater more than anything. Her new ballet school in Harlem is much fancier than the one at home in Georgia, and Al worries about fitting in. But she makes some new friends fast, and when she is chosen to dance the lead in a recital (her worst nightmare), her friends work together pull her through.

The characters are fun and unique, and Al has a great voice. The setting enhances the story, and the grown-ups (which I approach with caution in books for kids) fill out the plot dramatically. Great read for a middle grade dance student.

Lindsay says

This book is popular series choice

Even though this book is written by a celebrity and sometimes is not a good thing, this was a very good book. I think it gives something for kids to relate to and can kind of help them express their own feelings. It shows that she has a single mother in the book and now a days a lot of kids are going through this, so that'll help them not feel alone. And even though she didn't want to do ballet but she was pushed by her mother she ended up liking it, which I thought was a good way to show kids even though you think you may not like something try it, you may love it. The illustrations were really nice too, especially for younger readers who aren't quite used to chapter books yet, because I think there are enough in there to keep them interested in the book. Can't wait for my daughter to be about 6 years old so I can read this series with her.

Daisy Honeywell says

I read this book because I love books for children, sometimes they have something magical that I can not find in the Young adults' books.

I could not care less if the writer is Whoopi Goldberg. I did not pick the book because she is famous and I did not judge the book because she is famous.

Well, the protagonist is Aleksandra Petrakova Johnson, a 9 y.o that, all of a sudden, is forced to live in Harlem with her mother where she will continue to study ballet (as her mother wishes), but Aleksandra doesn't want to be a ballerina, she dreams to be a speed-skater!

To change house, meet new friends, and keep doing what she does not want to do (ballet) is not easy for Aleksandra, so she desperately wants to come back home. But her mother wants to have a career in New York. She is a stylist and thinks that Broadway needs her talent.

So Aleksandra keeps to study dance and meanwhile, at the ballet classes, she meets some girls that later will become her friends.

Aleksandra will learn to live in Harlem and will understand that, with fun and friends, ballet is not that bad. The book is kinda cute but I think it is written for a very Young audience. It is not deep and nothing particular happens. Just pages and pages of... nothing.

At the end Aleksandra and her friends skate all together, and she decides to do both ballet and skate and to remain in Harlem where her mother finally found a job thanks to her talent.

It is a nice book that I would recommend to children of 7 years old. It's written very easily and nothing magical is inside it.

Probably I would read another book written by Whoopi Goldberg but I'd not expect anything.

Sarah Hutchinson says

In this story Aleksandra Johnson's mother moves her from her school at Apple Creek to Harlem for her to The Nutcracker School of Ballet. Now away from all her friends and not know the first thing about being a ballerina, Alex feels completely out of her comfort zone. When she is selected to be the sugar plum fairy in their school recital her classmates not only have to help her learn what it takes to be a ballerina but get over her stage fright too! This story is really a charming tale of learning to dance and becoming comfortable with who you are. The illustrations bring the tale to life and show all the emotions we see Aleksandra go through.

This story could be used as a read aloud but I would suggest it more for a silent reading, as it may not appeal to the whole class. This would be a good read for advanced 1st grade through 3rd.

Jamie says

Aleksandra Petrakova Johnson's mother dreams of her being a famous ballet dancer. Aleksandra, however, has other ideas. She goes to a new ballet class in a new city to appease her mother, expecting to hate it. The other girls in her dance class become her best friends, and she discovers that she enjoys ballet.

This book has some illustrations scattered throughout the book. The illustrations simply reiterate what is happening in the story, but are enjoyable. Several languages are featured in this story, including some Spanish and Italian. All foreign language words are defined clearly.

Sugar Plum Ballerinas: Plum Fantastic is a wonderful book for children in second through fourth grade. They will relate to the characters, and enjoy the fact that the main group of friends is comprised of children from

many different cultures.

Annalise Michael says

Whoopi Goldberg did a wonderful job writing this popular children's book. It is a quick read, and it would be great for readers who are just beginning chapter books. The cover is extremely inviting to young girls because it uses many different shades of pink. The young ballerinas look like they are having a lot of fun, and their emotions would attract readers to this book. The illustrations throughout the book are black and white, but they do a wonderful job portraying emotion. These small images help to enhance the story, and compliment it really well.

This book is about a little girl named Alexandra Petrakova Johnson. Her mother had always dreamed of being a ballerina, and forced those dreams onto her daughter. Her mother loves ballet so much that she even named Alexandra after a famous ballerina. They move from Georgia to New York, where Alexandra takes ballet classes. However, she does not like ballet classes, and is terrified of being on stage! She would much rather be a speed skater. When Al is chosen to be the sugar plum fairy her classmates help her to face her fears.

I really liked this story, and I think that young readers would feel the same way. It is easy to read, and all of the story fits together really well. This book would also make a good read aloud, but I am not sure that boys would be instantly attracted to the book because of the cover. Children who have had to move to a new town would be able to relate to this book, and Goldberg does a great job delivering a simple message to readers.

Kristi Bernard says

Alexandra 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. Debbé, 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.

Bookishrealm says

This was such a beautiful book and I really enjoyed it! The illustrations were beautiful and you're able to learn so many new terms associated with ballet. I like that the main character gets the chance to build self confidence and make new friends that come from so many different backgrounds. It's a wide range of diversity. It's definitely well written and I would recommend for those at a 3rd to 4th grade reading level. It's a great way to also introduce diversity to a younger age group.

Kittiya says

Sara loved this story at first. as we read on though she is quickly losing her interest. I still think that this is a very charming book so far.

Well I finished it and really liked it. But as for Sara she just wanted to know what happened but didn't want me to read it to her. I liked how the girl supported each other as they where just becoming friends. How it taught you that things are not what they may seem and to not lose hope in your dreams. That it's good to try new things, REALLY give them a try to see what you think of them. In all a sweet story of friendship and sticking with goals.

Linda says

Alexandrea Petrakova Johnson has just moved from Georgia to Harlem with her mom, hopefully so her mother can break into the theater costume business. In addition to missing her home and friends, she finds herself enrolled in a famous ballet school. She doesn't want to be a ballerina; she wants to be a speed skater! So the plot is set first with a family conflict, but there are more things to deal with for Alexandria at ballet. I thought the plot seemed a little slow at first, but once other characters were developed and the challenge occurred, I became more interested to read on. I am not an expert in third grade book level, but am trying to read more so I can recommend them for appropriate students.

Anna says

This book is so cute! Alexandria Petrokova Johnson wants to be a speed skater NOT a ballerina but when she moves to New York with her mother she takes ballet classes at the Nutcracker School of Ballet. Alexandria has some ups and downs as she adjusts to her new life but with the help of friends she learns to appreciate ballet and helps her mother's costume designing business stay afloat.

Such a cute book! I hope the next in the series are just as enjoyable. The characters and unique enough to be fun and I appreciate the way the book subtlety highlights Harlem and historical African American ballet dancers. Great!

Ages: 7-10

Treasa says

Alexandrea doesn't want to be a ballerina; she wants to be a speed-skater. But when she and her mother move to Harlem, her mother signs her up for ballet classes at Miss Debbie's school. And suddenly Alexandria finds herself with the coveted solo for the dance recital: the Sugar Plum Fairy Dance. The problem is that she just can't get the steps or turns down. Can her friends help her learn the dance in time for the performance?

This is a sweet book about friendship. The ballet part of it would be fun for girls who are interested in ballet. But the main point is really the friendships that Alexandria forms in Harlem, so girls not interested in ballet could still enjoy the book.

ReGina says

Initially, I thought this was a much younger book with a much younger age appeal. However, Sugar Plum Ballerinas is really good for fourth grade (high third can read it; I think it would still hold interest for struggling fifth). It tells the story of Alexandra who moves from Georgia to Harlem. She wants to be a world-class skater, but her mother wants her to be a world-class ballerina. She enrolls her in Nutcracker School of Ballet. She's trying to adjust to her new life, though she really just wants to move back home. Then, she gets chosen for the Sugar Plum Ballerina - she can't do turns and she has horrible stage fright! How will she get through it all?

This is a good story that has lots of "other" nuggets. Brenda speaks backwards because Leonardo da Vinci did and he was a genius. Epatha has an Italian grandmother and a Puerto Rican grandmother, so she speaks both Italian and Spanish as well as the warring grandmothers each serve a food of their culture. The majority of the characters are African-American, though race is never an issue in the book. And it introduces ballet, which may be of interest to some kids who don't have real exposure to it. This is a good book that can appeal to a lot of audiences.

Linda says

A cute book about a young girl who moves with her mother from Georgia to New York City. Her mother has her in ballet classes so she can realize her mother's long ago dream of being a ballerina. The move to New York is not easy, leaving friends behind, mother's trying to establish a business with no contacts. Alexandria does not share her mother's vision of Alexandria as a prima ballerina. She'd rather be a skater. Everyone learns lessons in this story - mom, Alexandria, the other ballet dancers and teachers. The story even kept this almost 60-year old interested.
