



On Pointe

Lorie Ann Grover

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Our feet slip into satin shoes

with stiff shanks,

hard boxing,

tight elastic,

and slippery ribbons

that wrap and end

in hard knots.

The frayed edges

are crammed

out of sight.

We stand.

A row of bound feet

rises

to its toes.

For as long as she can remember, Clare and her family have had a dream: Someday Clare will be a dancer in City Ballet Company. For ten long years Clare has been taking ballet lessons, watching what she eats, giving up friends and a social life, and practicing until her feet bleed -- all for the sake of that dream. And now, with the audition for City Ballet Company right around the corner, the dream feels so close.

But what if the dream doesn't come true? The competition for the sixteen spots in the company is fierce, and many won't make it. Talent, dedication, body shape, size -- everything will influence the outcome. Clare's grandfather says she is already a great dancer, but does she really have what it takes to make it into the company? And if not, "then" what?

Told through passionate and affecting poems in Clare's own voice, "On Pointe" soars with emotion as it explores what it means to reach for a dream -- and the way that dreams can change as quickly and suddenly as do our lives.

On Pointe Details

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From Reader Review On Pointe for online ebook

KWinks says

For the most part, I don't mind novels in verse. This was one of my Teen Book Club's picks for May, and I was glad to read it. I liked Clare and Grandpa. Both go through major life changes and we get to see what happens, but most importantly, we get to hear what Clare thinks about what is happening. And that was where the prose really worked for me. I was confused on a few points (Clare's age, for example). I had pictured her being in her early teens, but a line about "in several years I will be a Spartan like my mother" (which refers to the high school) threw me. Was Clare much younger than I originally pictured her? And yet she travels through town and meets people for coffee? It would explain why she never drove....hmm. Anyway. I thought it was a glimpse (and that's it, a glimpse) into the world of kids preparing to enter a professional ballet company. The only real hint we have of what other characters are thinking is the beginning when each character gets a statement. The mother is a little hard to handle in this story (all the mothers, in fact). I worry that there is not enough about the ballet world that readers do not already know. Yes we know they purge. Yes we know it's competitive. And please, all of my ballet knowledge comes from VC Andrews and The Baby Sitters Club. But what is new is the idea that one should have a back up plan in the great chance that things do not work out the way the dancer wants them too (this would be true for ball players, singers, actors, etc) and that is NOT laid out in the book. So, I am rather disappointed there. Overall, not a bad read, but not THE ballet book readers have been waiting for.

Elaiyna says

Very realistic. Extremely actually. I can definitely relate to most of this. Great writing. Made me want to cry a few times because of how realistic this is.

TheTimeyWimeyNerdfighter says

I now have a fear of being too tall for ballet

Zizeloni says

A YA book about a teenager ballerina that tries to make it to the company. The pressures of this kind of life, the sacrifices. An in the end, how to deal with sickness in the family, which can put other things in perspective.

The book was nice, easy to read. I would like it to go a bit deeper, it was a bit "young" for me. But it would be a great book for a younger person.

Kimberly Hirsh says

Clare is a dancer. She wants to join the City Ballet, but she's taller than most professional dancers. Can she make it? If she can't, what will she do? *On Pointe* examines what happens when our dreams change. Clare begins the summer auditioning for the City Ballet, living with her grandfather, and chatting with her friend Rosella, who says negative things about their peers that make Clare uncomfortable. By the end of summer, Clare's perspective and priorities have undergone a dramatic shift.

Lorie Ann Grover's verse beautifully conveys the work, pain, and pride that come with being a dancer, as well as the self-consciousness and alienation we feel as our bodies change us from children to adults. Clare learns that our passions don't have to be our professions. This is a valuable lesson for anyone, but it is especially valuable for readers who are passionate about one art or another.

I would recommend *On Pointe* to fans of dance, poetry, or readers struggling to define themselves.

Aubrey Joy says

<https://pointextaken.wordpress.com/>

M says

I liked the overall message (i.e., you can pursue an activity simply because you enjoy it, not because you're going to turn it into a profession/be famous), but the writing was awkward and stilted, despite the "poetic" format.

Isabel Cody says

I absolutely adored this book! I think it was a fabulous read, even if it wasn't too much of a challenge. The writing was smooth- I loved the free verse style. It brought (I think) a lot more life and movement to the text, makes you picture it a different way.

I could truly connect to this book through my own experiences and that was a fantastic feeling. The character, Clare, finding that she can't reach the par in the sport of her choice (in this case dancing) and stops after years of training. I did the same thing with my own sport, and the feeling of agonizing loss is perfectly portrayed.

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This is the quote I've taken from the book. It shows the style of the writing (something that made the entire text worlds better for me) and also a taste of the emotion. Ballett and other activities like it are demanding of perfection- I think this describes that nicely. You're wrapping your feet into something agonizing and tucking away anything that could give the impression it's not simply beautiful and easy. I think that's very realistic and powerful as a reader to hear about- nothing sugarcoated or hidden behind fancy dresses and stage props.

I really loved the relationship aspect of the book- with her mother living the dream of becoming a dancer through her daughter, something I think is common for parents to do, and how Clare addresses the problem. Also her close relationship with her grandfather and the difficulties of health issues is written very nicely- and even sad things were engulfing and left you feeling exactly how the author intended.

This book covered all the bases of something I enjoy, the writing is lovely, the characters develop well through the text while you learn and grow with them, and the relationships are realistic and heartfelt. I think it was a great read, and something I would absolutely pick up again just to get the same feelings. I most definately reccomend it.

-Isabel

Layla T says

I thought the book was okay. The only problem for me was that it didn't really talk a lot about her dancing. It was mostly talking about her grandpa and how she was caring for him from his stroke. But, I feel the author did this to show that throughout the book Clare found that she was a dancer whether or not she made it into City Ballet. So, overall the book is about someone finding her passion and getting through tough times with that passion and love at stand.

Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says

Novel in verse that vividly describes the physical pain of being a ballet dancer.

Nicole Catherine says

Normally I hate novels in verse, but this one seemed really natural, like you were hearing Clare's thoughts.

I was amazed by this book. It was beautiful and sad and true. I'm not sure if a non-dancer would get much out of it (and hey, I've got an audition looming in my future that made the book that much more meaningful) but as a dancer of seven years, I loved it.

Lizzy Seitz says

3.5 out of 5 stars

For being written in "verse" it was more just weirdly structured paragraphs, not verse. Also Clare had some very bitchy streaks that I didn't love overall but the general story of coming to love yourself and what you love to do was good

Amanda says

2 stars.

As long as you love what you do, you will succeed.

On Pointe is about Clare. She lives in Washington and wants to be in the City Ballet. It is her family's dream. Problem is, she's tall and competing against the others in her class.

Though it had good morals, On Pointe was still boring. It is written in verse and some parts, like the parts where Clare is just at home doing normal things, could have been written in normal first person POV prose. Other parts, however, were lovely in verse and really got the moral across.

The big message of this book was the one I mentioned above: As long as you love what you do, you will succeed. Clare, at first, thinks that if you can't do ballet professionally, you are a failure. What she doesn't realize until the end is that you can dance for yourself. You don't have to dance to impress others or be part of a company. You can do it because you love it and you will still succeed in being a dancer, albeit not a professional one.

I am a dancer and one of the flaws in this book was the pointe shoes. I do quite a fair bit of pointe work for 4 years and I have NEVER gotten a blister. In this book, everyone in Clare's class has popped blisters and blood on their tights. I understand that it is probably a higher, harsher level of pointe than what I am used to but it would have been more realistic if the girls' feet conditions were more varied. For example, Clare could have had the blisters, but Willow could have perfect feet and Rosella could have just had a broken toenail.

It starts off with small paragraphs explaining the people in Clare's class. I originally thought that this book was going to be from all their POVs. I think I would have liked it better if we got to see what Willow, Dia and the others were thinking.

The book actually had me feeling quite depressed at the start. Ballet isn't always that harsh. Clare seemed like she didn't really like it, in my opinion. Also, unlike Audition, the verse didn't have much symbolism. In Audition, different ballet steps and positions helped tell Sara's story. In On Pointe they are used in class and that's about it.

I never worked out how old Clare was. It says on the jacket flap that On Pointe is aimed at ages 8-12 but I think it should be higher because it touches onto things like eating disorders and the need to be thin. It never actually, blatantly, goes against Rosella's puking. I found that odd.

Not as good as I'd hoped. Older readers might want to try Audition if they are looking for a different ballet verse novel. On Pointe was fairly disappointing and I really could not see which age group it would fit into. Also, I was quite bored at some points. Good morals though.

Dahlia says

So to begin with I don't usually like books in verse. The storyline is simple. Clare is a dancer who is living in Washington state with her grandpa. She really wants to make it to city ballet. She's dedicated her life to dancing. Another thing I didn't like was that like all of the girls had bulimia and that was annoying and very stereotypical.

Ruth says

When Clare's dream of being a ballet dancer is crushed, she realises that there's more to life than being the prima ballerina. Pretty good.
