



Ballerino Nate

By Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

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Nate has the heart of a dancer, and he is determined to learn ballet. Even his older brother, Ben, can't change his mind with his claims that "boys don't dance." Or can he? When Ben tells Nate that he'll have to wear pink shoes and a dress, Nate becomes awfully worried. And when he's the only boy in his ballet class, he begins to think that Ben is right: Maybe boys don't dance.

Exuberant and true-to-childhood, this is a warm and funny story about sibling squabbles, the joy of ballet, and best of all, grabbing hold of your dreams.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

PreSchool-Grade 2—Nate decides he wants to dance after attending a recital, but his older brother tells him that boys can't be ballerinas. Even though the child's parents tell him otherwise, Ben's words worry the would-be performer. Nate loves his ballet class, but he wonders why he is the only boy. His troubles disappear when he attends a professional performance and meets one of the male dancers. He explains that he calls himself a dancer, but you could also call a male dancer a ballerino. Alley's ink-and-watercolor illustrations of the animal characters have a playful energy that moves the story forward. While the word ballerino may not exist, which the text unfortunately fails to clarify, children will admire Nate's persistence to follow his interest despite the obstacles. Aspiring dancers of either gender will enjoy this look at the art of dancing from a male perspective.—*Rachel G. Payne, Brooklyn Public Library, NY*

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From [Booklist](#)

PreS-K. In the spirit of Charlotte Zolotow's *William's Doll* (1972) and Tomie dePaola's *Oliver Button Is a Sissy* (1979), this picture book offers a true-to-life view of childhood enthusiasms hamstrung by gender stereotypes. Anthropomorphic puppy Nate signs up for ballet lessons after watching a local recital, but needling from his older brother ("Boys can't be ballerinas. They never, ever, ever can"), not to mention being the only boy in class, weakens his resolve. Finally, his encouraging mother arranges a visit to a professional ballet that resuscitates Nate's excitement. Though the story's pace seems uneven, Bradley writes smoothly and insightfully about Nate's experiences, updating the familiar parable by allowing his crisis of confidence to be almost entirely internal rather than triggered by clichéd naysayers (Mom and Dad are equally enlightened, and their discussions defuse brother's snide words). Alley's watercolor-and-pencil contributions, portraying an entirely canine universe, capture both the warm family dynamics and Nate's zooming, irrepressible energy. *Jennifer Mattson*

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About the Author

Kimberly Brubaker Bradley lives on a forty-two-acre farm in Bristol, Tennessee. She is the author of several books for children, including *Leap of Faith*, *Jefferson's Sons*, and *The War That Saved My Life*.

Users Review

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