

OUR FIRST DANCE RECITAL



Illustrated by Nika Novak





This book belongs to:

Name

In this story, I will discover with Ava that courage
does not mean never being afraid.

Courage means trying, taking a deep breath,
and believing in yourself.

Today is a very special day at our dance school. The children are preparing for the final performance they have been eagerly waiting for. Over the past few weeks, it has been the only thing they have been talking about.



How much glitter will sparkle in the air?
Where should we stand on the stage?
How many turns are enough, and how many are too many?
Which costume colour should we choose?
Which music is best?

Everyone wants to show what they have learned. Especially Ava. She is immensely excited about her very first dance performance.



She has been practicing hard all year long. Even at home, secretly, in her room when nobody was watching. She is determined to show everything she knows and truly shine on stage. She can hardly stay still.

While the other children are tying their dance shoes,



When teacher Karolina enters the hall, the children happily run to hug her.



Ava jumps off the chandelier and does two cartwheels, but teacher Karolina does not seem very pleased with her antics.



The group lines up by the ballet barre, teacher Karolina turns on the music, and the training begins.

Arm here, leg there, point your toes, point your toes,
point your toes!



While the other children are already practising, Ava notices that her dance shoes are untied.

Teacher Karolina walks over to her and asks sternly:

“Ava,
did you arrive early enough to tie
your shoes on time?”

“I did,”
Ava
answers
quietly.



Ava quickly ties her shoes tightly and rushes back into line by the barre. But because she missed the beginning, she is completely confused and mixes up all the movements. She tries and tries, but everything goes wrong. Teacher Karolina keeps correcting her.

The other children watch what is happening, and some of them start laughing at her out loud.



Ava feels like crying. She feels awful. She has been waiting for this day all year. She has practised and worked so hard, and now she has forgotten everything - and even her classmates are laughing at her.

Teacher Karolina notices Ava's distress,
stops the music and gathers the group
into a circle for a talk.



“Do you remember
what I’ve been telling
you since the very first
day of dance class?”

Ava’s friend Oto speaks
up: “That the dance
performance will only
succeed if we help each
other.”

“That’s right. The performance will only succeed if we
dance well together, not each of us on our own. Well
done, Oto,” teacher Karolina praises him.

“And what do we do when we forget the steps?”

“We stop, take a deep *breath and breathe out,*”

answers Oto as he takes a deep breath (“huuh”) and exhales (“haah”). The whole group joins him:



Then everyone continues together: “Then we repeat the steps without music and start again!”

Teacher Karolina smiles and claps her hands. She is proud of her group – especially proud that they know how to work together as a team. The children line up by the barre once again and follow teacher Karolina. This time, Ava gets it right, too. She is very happy that her friends helped her.

The time for the performance
is here. The children are
getting ready while teacher
Karolina helps them.



Their little skirts flutter gently,
and every dance shoe is carefully tied.
The tension grows stronger because only a few minutes
remain before the performance begins. The children
curiously peek from behind the stage curtain.

Ava notices how full the hall is. Suddenly, she becomes frightened. She has butterflies in her tummy, her legs begin to shake and her palms become sweaty.

“What if I forget everything again and the whole audience laughs at me?” Ava thinks.



Teacher Karolina notices Ava nervously shifting from foot to foot and asks if she is afraid.

Ava nods.

Teacher Karolina gathers the children into a circle once more. From her pocket, she pulls out a small red velvet pouch. “What is that?” Oto asks curiously. Teacher Karolina tells the children that inside the pouch there is a very special magical dust that calls upon the Good Fairy of Dance – a fairy who chases away fear and helps dancers perform the very best they can. The children stare in amazement, their eyes sparkling. Teacher Karolina sprinkles each dancer with the magical dust.



When Ava feels the tiny specks of magical dust land on the tip of her nose, she realises that her fear is magically disappearing – as if the wind has blown it away. Just in time, because in the very next moment, the curtain opens.





The performance turns out more wonderful than anyone could have imagined. The children bow to the audience with huge smiles on their faces. The audience stands and applauds loudly. Even the mayor is smiling proudly, jumping with excitement and clapping enthusiastically. Ava feels an enormous sense of relief. She is so happy that she did it. At the end, the whole group hugs tightly and joyfully dances around for a bit longer. Together, they celebrate and thank the magical dust and the Fairy of Dance for filling them with courage.

And Ava thanks her friends too. She knows it would have been much harder without them. She is grateful to have such kind-hearted friends around her - and a teacher who believes in them.



MY MOMENT OF COURAGE

Paste your photo or draw your memory here.

Date of event: _____

After the event, I felt:



What I will remember most:

MY LITTLE REMINDER FOR COURAGE

When I get a little stomach ache before a
performance, competition, or special event,
I remember:

I breathe in.

Huuuh ...

I breathe out.

Haaah ...

I look forward.

I believe in myself.

If I make a mistake, it's okay.

I can try again.

I'm not alone.

I can do it.



Our First Dance Recital

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