



Last Dance

Hanna Schroy

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Hanna Schroy's graphic novel begins as principal dancer Miriam spins in the arms of her handsome partner, living the life she has dreamed of since her girlhood. The dream turns into a potentially career ending injury when she falls and her ankle fractures; the injury is compounded by her years of dancing on tiny fissures in the bone. In this vibrant work, Miriam considers how much she is willing to lose in order to continue pursuing her dream.

After her break, Miriam returns to the company against her doctor's orders, eager to resume her leading role. But her aching body will not comply, and neither will the director. He orders her to rest and calls up another dancer to take her place. Enraged and disheartened, Miriam leaves and throws a tantrum in a practice room, where a thrown slipper breaks a mirror and reveals a secret door. When she opens the door, Miriam finds a pair of white and gold slippers and a mysterious whispering voice that could change her fate, and the fate of the company, forever.

Multicultural without drawing verbal attention to this, the book's illustrations keep pace with its fast-moving story, showing changing dynamics with subtle fluctuations of color: yellow represents the insidious taint of negative forces within Miriam and the others in the company. The company is the central setting, and its friendships, camaraderie, and discipline compound the gravity of the decisions that Miriam faces as she comes to terms with what dance has given her and what it has taken from her.

With vibrant pictures that connote action and emotion well, this graphic novel is a sobering fable about the prices that people pay to stay at the top of their art.

CAMILLE-YVETTE WELSCH (November / December 2020)

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