



## Swan: The Life and Dance of Anna Pavlova

*Laurel Snyder, Julie Morstad (illustrator)*

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The world is big.

Anna is small.

The snow is  
everywhere  
and all around.

But one night . . .

One night, her mother takes her to the ballet, and everything is changed. Anna finds a beauty inside herself that she cannot contain.

So begins the journey of a girl who will one day grow up to be the most famous prima ballerina of all time, inspiring legions of dancers after her: the brave, the generous, the transcendently gifted Anna Pavlova.

## **Swan: The Life and Dance of Anna Pavlova Details**

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Author : Laurel Snyder , Julie Morstad (illustrator)

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## From Reader Review Swan: The Life and Dance of Anna Pavlova for online ebook

**Alyson (Kid Lit Frenzy) says**

As I read this book, I had the feeling that this must have been a very special book to Laurel Snyder. This is my favorite picture book that she has done and I want to say this is probably her best to date (in my opinion). The book is a lovely melding of poetic, heart-felt text and beautiful illustrations.

## **Saleh MoonWalker says**

## Colby Sharp says

If you are going to read this book, please read it aloud. Snyder's words will sing and dance of your tongue.

**Janet says**

O! My heart leapt up to read this poetic and lilting and moving book. The text itself is lovely enough on its own, but when paired with the lush and evocative illustrations, it turns into a masterpiece that made me lose my breath a little each time I turned the page.

Amazing work.

Mary says

A luscious picture book biography set in the late 19th century of the Russian prima ballerina Anna Pavlova. The book is tall with an exquisite combination of ink, gouache, graphite, pen, and crayon illustrations. The lyrical text is minimal so readers will need to read the author's note at the back to get the context for the stunning illustrations.

### **Tasha says**

This is a poetic and radiant look at the life of Anna Pavlova, prima ballerina. It begins with her childhood where she grew up poor, the daughter of a laundress in Russia. Then her mother takes her to the ballet one night and Anna's life is transformed by a desire to dance. She auditioned twice for the Imperial Ballet School, turned down the first time because she was too young. At age 10, she was admitted and studied dance. Her body was considered all wrong for ballet, since she was so thin and not athletically built. She became the most famous ballerina of all time, helped by her tireless work to bring dance and music to those who had never experienced it. The book goes all the way through to her death, where she still longed to perform and dance until the very end.

Snyder's poetry is just as delicate and strong as Pavlova herself. Through the words you can feel the tremble of desire, the longing for a different life and then the drive to learn and perform. As Pavlova's story continues, Snyder captures the way that she created a home for herself when Russia changed and the importance of her performing around the world. Her performance as the swan is particularly beautifully captured in words, allowing her grace and particular style to be understood by young readers.

Morstad's illustrations help with this as well. They highlight her beauty and grace, allow her to shine on the page and dance across it. Her pale beauty and black hair captivate on the page. Other pages show how hard she worked both in learning to dance and then again in a repeating format how hard she worked as a prima ballerina as well.

Beautifully written and illustrated, this picture book in poetry offers a glimpse at the wonder that was Anna Pavlova. Appropriate for ages 6-8.

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### **Laura Harrison says**

One of the most beautiful picture books I have ever seen/read. And I have seen/read probably thousands of picture books in my life (no joke). I wish this title could win a 2016 Caldecott but I believe the illustrator is Canadian (sigh). The text is simply stellar and the illustrations are swoon worthy. Vibrant, elegant, stunning-perfect for a book about the life of a prima ballerina. I can write pages on how much I adore Swan. It is as good as it gets. Trust me.

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### **Laurel says**

A childhood obsession becomes a book!

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### **Brooke says**

“Every day must end in night, every bird must fold its wings, every feather falls at last and settles.”

Anna Pavlova was born in 1881 to a struggling laundress. It was a hard life; Anna's life should have been dismal. But one night Anna's mother told her, “You are going to enter fairyland.” After seeing sleeping

beauty for the first time she became enthralled and wanted only one thing: to become a dancer, but in order for that dream to become a reality she had to leave her mother behind and go to boarding school to learn ballet.

Anna's story is such a beautiful and inspiring one. These illustrations are gorgeous and reflect a beautiful life lived.

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### **Emily Scheinman says**

This will be one of the most talked about picture books this year. Stunning artwork and beautiful text. I can't wait to see this published!

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### **Jessie says**

The illustrations are perfect for the telling of AP's life story. I am going to buy this book & read it again.

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### **Eve says**

This was a delightful book about Anna Pavlova, and her contribution to ballet reaching all kinds of people around the world. The illustrations were gorgeous, and the storyline was appropriate for its audience.

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### **Niki (Daydream Reader) says**

Gorgeous words and pictures! I love it and I wish it was eligible for the Caldecott!

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### **Pam ?Because Someone Must Be a Thorn? Tee says**

Anna Pavlova was born in Czarist Russia. The daughter of a laundry woman she miraculously became a prima ballerina, a woman who transformed ballet, who brought this beautiful art to the masses.

Syder's and Morstad's SWAN is a gorgeous book. Morstad's artwork is so pretty. So touching and sweet. And Syder's verse makes for a very good read-aloud.

SWAN is a book that I would share with girls .AND. boys, and it's a book I suggest you approach bass-ackwards. By which I mean that I think everyone will get more out of the book if they start with the Author's Note at the end.

That brief note sums up aspects of Pavlova's life that readers are going to recognize in the verse and images...

and if they are like me and mine they are going to enjoy the book more if approached in this order.

Snyder, for example, relates how Pavlova's body wasn't considered ideal at that time. She was slim and had a bad back. (This is even more fascinating when you consider that Misty Copeland's struggle for acceptance was just the opposite. Copeland possibly having a physique more like the sturdy ballerinas of Czarist Russia before Pavlova.)

Pavlova also had to reinforce her ballet shoes in order to go *en pointe*. I really think this author's note is worth reading.

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This is a beautiful book that is a good read-aloud, and if approached correctly there is much to discuss.

Recommend.

Disclosure: review copy

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