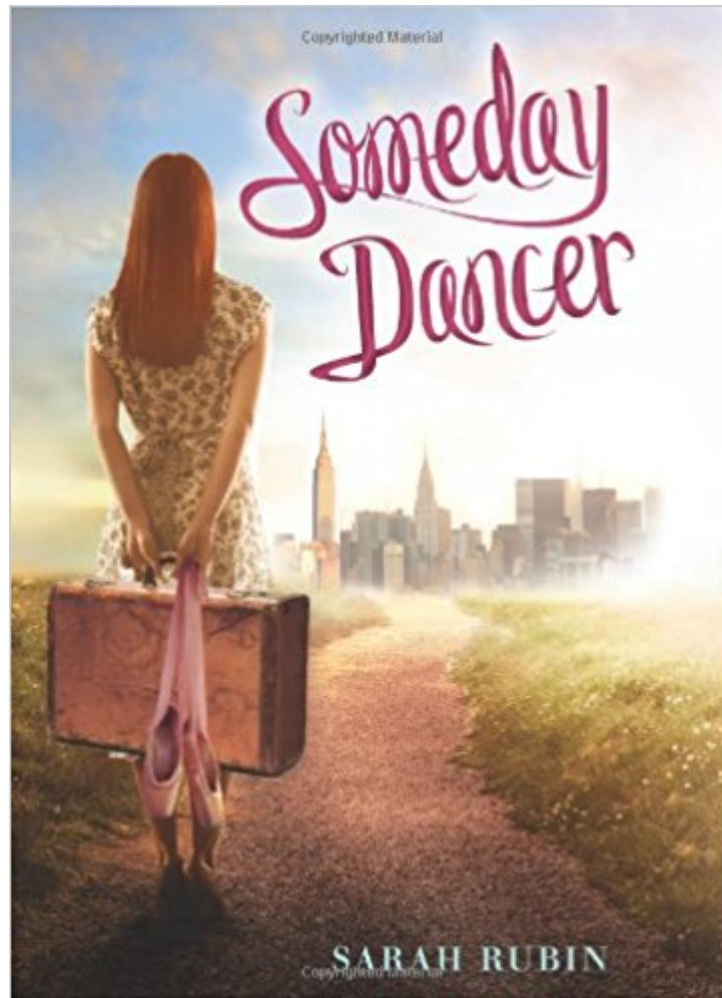




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Someday Dancer



Synopsis

A ballerina tale with a thoroughly modern twist! Casey Quinn has got more grace in her pinkie toe than all those prissy ballet-school girls put together, even if you'd never guess it from the looks of her too-long legs and dirty high-top sneakers. It's 1959, and freckle-faced Casey lives in the red-dust countryside of South Carolina. She's a farm girl: Her family can't afford ballet lessons. But Casey's dream is to dance in New York City. And if anyone tries to stand in her way, she's going to pirouette and jet right over them! Casey's got the grit, and Casey's got the grace: Is that enough to make it in Manhattan someday? Or might the Big Apple have something even better in mind? When she meets a visionary choreographer she calls "Miss Martha," Casey's ballerina dream takes a thoroughly, thrillingly modern twist!

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 6-9-In this novel set in the ballet and modern dance world of 1959, hardworking, penniless Casey Quinn journeys from South Carolina to New York City to realize her dreams. The teen uses a wonderfully active voice in tune with her physical nature in her present-tense narrative, e.g., "My stomach quivers like a raw egg." Casey's stubborn can-do personality is nicely enhanced by interactions with multidimensional side characters, such as her selfless good cook of a grandma

and a snobby, rich peer. Casey faces grief, loss, and many other tribulations, but she overcomes these obstacles, has some really good luck, ingratiates herself with the right people, and ultimately earns a role in a performance with the Martha Graham Company. At first glance the historical details appear suitably contextualized, although in romanticizing the era the author omits historical accuracy on a great many fronts: e.g., the famously curt George Balanchine is depicted as kind and the School of American Ballet inhabits a grandiose building rather than the plain building it actually occupied in 1959. Nonetheless, many collections will welcome this spunky '50s heroine and her introduction to the world of modern dance.-Rhona Campbell, Georgetown Day School, Washington, DC

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When Casey hears of an open ballet audition in New York City, the poor South Carolina girl with no formal dance training decides to battle for a spot. She knows in her heart that she is a natural dancer, born for the stage. How she winds up not a ballerina but a student of real-life modern dance doyenne Martha Graham forms the crux of this pleasant story set in 1959. The novel is at its strongest when describing Graham's powerful personality and the intense work needed to succeed as a dancer. Casey is a sympathetic character who says of her passion, "The way I am dancing on the inside. The way I am flying. It is like no dance in the world. It is better." Despite doses of melodrama Casey's rival is a mean girl from her hometown, and her beloved grandmother dies before she can see Casey on stage "this is a good recommendation for fans of reality-TV dancing competitions, as well as aficionados of stories about striving to succeed in the arts. Grades 6-9. --Karen Cruze

This is an incredibly well written book for children as well as adults. It is both heartwarming and inspirational. Despite many obstacles, through determination and perseverance, a young girl goes after her dream to become a ballerina. Told in the first person, you experience all of her feelings along her journey to success. The book flows well, and you can't put it down. I would highly recommend it.

I purchased this book for my Granddaughter as she loves dancing and takes 3 dance classes a week. She told me she loved the story and it makes her want to dance even more now. So, if you have a young daughter or granddaughter that loves to dance..then I highly recommend this book!

What a charming thoughtful book for pre teens. This was a gift to my close friend and both girls loved the story.

This is a book that just keeps you wanting to read until you are finished. The characters come alive that you feel you know them personally. And you can't be sure where the travels are going to take them. Put this on your list for every girl 9-13 years old.

The book is very interesting for young adults. It is easy reading and holds your interest chapter after chapter. I would recommend it for young ladies, not especially for young males.

I am adult who loved reading this book and finished it in two days. I bought it for my daughter to read, but I would recommend it for teens or adults. It's about a young girl who has to overcome many obstacles to achieve her dream of becoming a dancer. Very inspirational.

Casey Quinn is a dancer. Not that you'd know that by looking at her. Freckle-faced with seemingly too-long legs she looks the part of a farm girl, not a ballerina. But dance is all Casey can think about. Every day, Casey climbs the tree outside the local dance school and watches ballet class. On the way to and from wherever she's going, she works out the steps from what she's seen, twirling and leaping around in her dirty high-top sneakers. Casey may not be able to afford classes in her South Carolina town, but that doesn't keep her from dreaming big, from dreaming of New York -- even if that means working as a cleaning lady in the hospital with her mother and grandmother. It's just the three women in Casey's house, and they're just scrimping by. But when Casey learns of a ballet audition in Manhattan, her grandmother makes certain that she's there. The only real problem -- Casey has no formal training. It seems the universe has other plans for Casey, though not what you'd expect. The year is 1959, and ballet isn't the only form of dance people want to see. When Casey meets choreographer Martha Graham a whole new modern world is opened. "Someday Dancer" can be split into two parts -- Casey's time in South Carolina and her time in New York -- and both parts essential to making this great book whole. It's clear author Sarah Rubin has a love of dance. It practically jumps through Casey and off the page. It's also clear that Sarah did her research. Those who aren't familiar with modern dance often think it's all the same. But like ballet, which has a number of different methods, so, too, does modern dance. The Graham style in particular is very structured with specific technique. I was first exposed to the Graham style of dance as an early teen, and I was excited to find the same warm-up represented in "Someday

Dancer."Beyond the dance, Sarah has written a compelling story of a young girl following her dream and realizing that dreams can be altered. There's also a strong family component that's weaved throughout, creating a grounding influence. I would highly recommend the to dance and non-dance lovers alike. It's one of my favorite dance books in recent years.

Maybe you can't do ballet in high-tops, but that don't mean you can't dance. I know I don't look like a ballerina, not in these dirty high-tops with my scabby knees. But inside there is a ballerina leaping to get out, leaping so hard that sometimes I think she'll bruise my heart.- from Someday Dancer by Sarah Rubin, Page 105 and Page 9

Casey is a dancer, heart and soul. She can't help but skip down the streets of South Carolina and twirl-twirl-twirl whenever she feels like it. She's been in love with ballet since she was little, when her grandmother took her to see Cinderella and she could barely stay in her seat, eagerly pointing her toes and wishing she could "scramble down the aisle and dance with [the ballerinas]." Unfortunately, her family can't afford ballet lessons, so Casey regularly peeks in the window of a dance studio and copies the moves to the best of her ability. When she learns about an open audition for The School of American Ballet in New York City, Casey saves up the money she earns working beside her mother as a cleaning lady at the hospital. With some assistance, she manages to make it to New York. The first audition leads to an opportunity that is better suited to Casey, something she hadn't even imagined, something she's never tried before: modern dance. The year is 1959, and Casey's new instructor is Martha Graham, who is widely regarded as a pioneer in her field. Though, at times, I thought that more detail and description of movement and choreography would help readers who have never seen or experienced modern dance, I appreciated the moments when Casey expressed her love for dance and her gratitude for the opportunities she was given because I'm a dancer and actress myself. Those who know what it feels like to do well at an audition or on a test of any sort will understand this: I walk out of Miss Martha's studio and down the street, floating towards the bus station. I don't care if people push past me, or shoot me the greasy eyeball for not scooting fast enough. I want to soak up every last second of the city. [...] I know I'll be back, but I want something to hold on to, something to remember while I'm waiting in the wings in Warren. When I get on the bus to go home, my heart is full... - Page 104

The beginning of chapter 29 on page 192 captures the experience of the first time you enter a beautiful theatre in which you're going to perform. It feels like if I open the door all the way I might let the magic out. Yes, yes, yes. For dancers, actors, singers, this can be our wardrobe to Narnia. Anyone who was raised with love but very little money and had dreams that seemed out of reach due to that financial situation knows what it's like to walk in Casey's shoes. I hope that you

dance if you want to, that you move when the music moves you, whether you're in toe shoes, tap shoes, sneakers, or your bare feet!

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