

She Still Twirls



Miss Bell walked with a cane.
Tap, tap, tap. It clicked across
the studio floor, steady as a
drum beat. Every morning,
she stood and watched her
three girls. She watched each
leap and spin with such **care**.
'Higher!' she called. 'Lighter!
You are stars, not elephants!'
The girls giggled at that.
They loved Miss Bell very
much. But they had no idea
who she really was.





Because Miss Bell had a secret. When she was a girl, she danced down the streets at night, and her feet **barely** made a sound on the stones. She **dared** to swing around the lamp posts, one arm reaching high into the dark **air**. She leaped past the tall clock tower and raced across the old stone bridge, with only the stars **staring** at her on those long, still nights. She did not walk back then. She did not even try. She floated.

She needed a partner who could keep up with her, but most who tried fell far behind. Then, at last, she found one.

'You are fast,' he said, the very first time the **pair** danced together on stage. 'You are not bad at all,' she said back. And she meant every word.

When they **shared** the stage, something **rare** happened. The **pair** moved as one. Every last person in the full crowd went still and forgot to breathe.





Word spread fast. Soon, people from all over asked her to dance. She packed her suitcase, slapped a sticker on it, and leaped across the world. The **airfares** were high, but she did not **care** one bit. Every town had a brand new stage. Every stage brought a roar from the crowd. The whole world knew her name.

But this is the part no one tells you about being a star. She practiced when her feet screamed stop. She could **barely** stand, but she pushed on and kept going.

She danced past midnight, past the moon, past the point where every part of her body begged her to quit. She could not **bear** to stop.

'Not yet,' she said. 'Not yet, not yet, not yet.'





And on the big night, the biggest night of all, she took the stage one last time. The stage lights **flared**, and gold light filled the whole room. The crowd clapped so hard the walls shook. Her partner held her steady as they floated side by side across the golden stage. 'Wow!' the crowd roared. 'Ooh!' They could not help it. Neither could she. It was that kind of night.

The spotlight wrapped around her like a soft cloak. Red roses rained down at her feet. She closed her eyes and took it all in. Then a voice rang out across the hall: 'The Prima Ballerina! The best of the best!' That title was **rare**, the **rarest** of all. It was the highest prize she could ever win. And she had earned every single bit of it.





Now, back in the studio, one girl stopped mid-twirl and **stared** at Miss Bell. 'Miss Bell, did you ever dance on a big stage?' Miss Bell looked at her cane. She looked at the wood floor. She looked at those three little faces, full of the same fire she once had. The girls were not **aware** of her secret. Miss Bell winked. 'What do you think?' And she tapped her cane twice. One, two. Right on the beat.



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Miss Bell taps her cane across the studio floor and tells her three young dancers to leap higher, lighter, like stars. But the girls have no idea about the secret she's hiding, the daring nights of dancing under the stars that shaped who she became. What was Miss Bell really like before she picked up that cane? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 112: air, are, ear /air/), this book practices words like 'care', 'rare', 'stare', 'dared', 'aware'.

Phonics Focus: air, are, ear /air/

air, airfares, aware, barely, bear, care, dared, flared, pair, rare, rarest, shared, stare, stared, staring

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