

# Orca Book Publishers

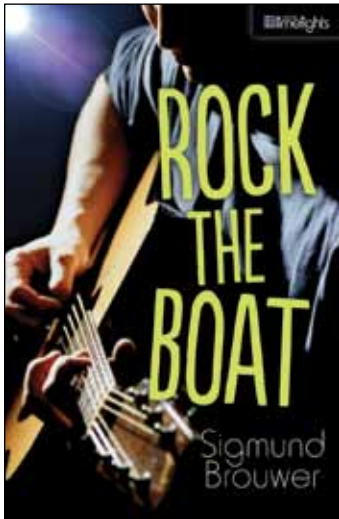
*Rights Catalogue—Limelights*



ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS  
*Reaching More Readers*

## Transatlantic Agency

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**World Rights Available**  
(ex – North America)  
128 pages · ages 11–14

# Rock the Boat

Sigmund Brouwer

*Webb didn't come to Nashville to get ripped off.*

**W**ebb believes that if you want to reach your dreams, you have to live life loud. Bring the roof down. Rock the boat. Make sure that when you look back, you have no regrets. But when a shady music producer steals one of Webb's songs, Webb finds out how hard it is for a kid on his own in Nashville to get justice. With the help of an unlikely ally, Webb discovers that he has what it takes to succeed: talent, determination and some good friends.

"Brouwer keeps both chapters and book as short as possible; despite this, his characters shine as individuals, and clearly he has done his research on the dangers the music world poses for new talent...A quick read for music lovers." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"A quick, easy and compelling narrative appealing to both genders. Although it is aimed at eleven to fourteen-year-olds, the simple vocabulary, short sentences and brief chapters make it accessible to much younger readers." —*Resource Links*

"Will hook readers from the first chapter...True to life and easy to grasp...A suspenseful plot, fascinating details, and a likable protagonist make this title a wonderful addition to hi-lo collections." —*School Library Journal*



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# Breaking Big

Penny Draper

*Will one more prank be one too many?*

**R**obin's got everything it takes to be a principal dancer: the body, the feet, the strength and the passion. But his devil-may-care attitude plays havoc with discipline at the Premier Dance School. One more prank may be one too many. That's why everyone is shocked when he's the only student dancer picked to understudy with the company, even though the choice makes sense—Robin is cast as Puck, the annoying trickster fairy in *A Midsummer's Night Dream*. Shock turns to horror when the principal dancer is injured and Robin has to perform instead. The other dancers don't think he can pull it off, and even Robin wonders if it's too much too soon.

Will his big break kill his career before it even starts?

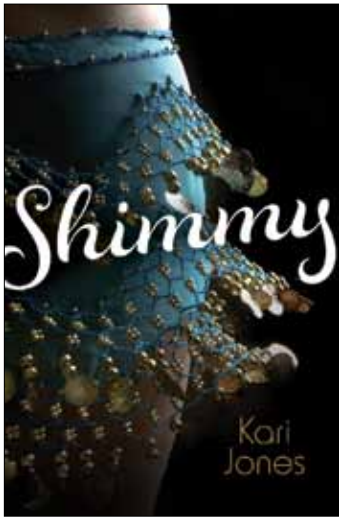
"It is refreshing to see this story told from a male dancer's perspective, and Robin's narrative style, arrogant and vulnerable by turn, aptly reflects the angst and self-doubt of a teenager who realizes that obtaining his heart's desire means that he now has something to lose...While Robin is the novel's protagonist, ballet itself is undeniably the story's main character. Contextual usage of ballet terminology and vivid description of movement bring the physicality and fluidity of dance to life, making this novel both a love letter and useful introduction to the art form." —*Kirkus Reviews*



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## Shimmy

Kari Jones

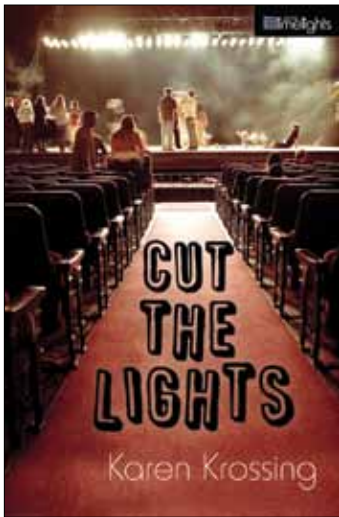
*Lila has been given a chance to pursue her dream—but is it worth the cost?*

**L**ila has always wanted a career in belly dance, so she is thrilled when she is invited to join Dana Sajala's competitive and prestigious studio. But dancing at the new studio isn't quite what she expected. Dana Sajala is a tough teacher, and Lila finds the constant criticism stressful. On top of that, Lila misses the dancers from her old troupe, and a rift is developing between her and her best friend, Angela, who is not altogether sympathetic to Lila's struggles. Lila has always loved belly dance—the music, the costumes, the choreography—but when she realizes that none of it is as much fun as it used to be, she starts to question whether she has made the right choice.

### Canadian Children's Book Centre Best Books selection

"The central themes of this novel are fantastic and not often explored seriously in teen fiction. How important is it for creative teens to be completely wedded to their art form...*Shimmy* shows readers the worth in building a community and supporting your peers." —*CM Magazine*

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## Cut the Lights

Karen Krossing

*Is the play cursed or is Briar just a lousy director?*

**B**riar has a vision for the one-act play she's been chosen to direct at her high school. She's going to create a masterpiece. If only everyone involved in the production shared her vision. Her leading lady is gifted but troubled, her leading man has a crush on the leading lady, her stage manager doesn't have a clue, and her best friend, who wrote the play, is worried that Briar's production is cursed. As Briar struggles to motivate her cast and crew, she learns some important truths about the fine art of directing.

"This entry into the Limelights line is one of [Orca's] finest offerings...Krossing has done her research, filling her story with specifics...that any young thespian will recognize. A ticking clock...lends a level of tension greater than that of many books with higher stakes." —*Booklist*, starred review

"A fast-paced read...*Cut the Lights* builds to a satisfying conclusion and will appeal not only to budding performers, but also to any teen who has ever felt misunderstood." —National Reading Campaign blog

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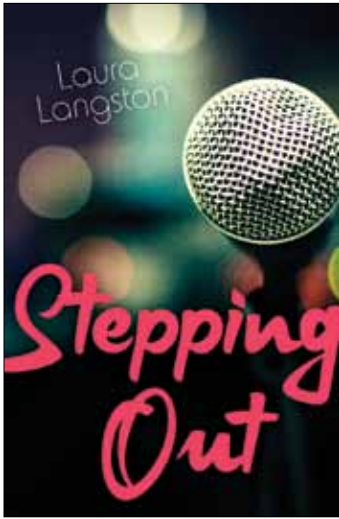


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## Stepping Out

Laura Langston

*Succeeding in stand-up comedy is no laughing matter.*

**L**aughter is fifteen-year-old Paige Larsson's currency in life. It takes the sting out of life's tough stuff. It eases the pain of nasty comments, agonizing moments in gym class and awkward pauses at parties. She likes it even more when others laugh with her, so she's become a YouTube comedy vlogger.

Now Paige is about to step out of her comfort zone and compete—live and onstage—in the prestigious International Teens in Comedy festival. Winning will give her the opportunity to work with some of the biggest names in comedy. It'll also mean \$10,000 for her school's performing-arts department. But Paige has always used her humor to mask the pain of a disability, and in the world of stand-up comedy, that won't cut it anymore.

“This entertaining and inspiring story will appeal to anyone who feels like they don't fit in. Paige is a genuinely funny character and a winner that readers will root for.” —*Booklist*

“Langston takes the reader realistically through every nerve-wracking step: in the hotel, backstage, and through three performances at the mic.” —*VOYA*



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## Hot New Thing

Laura Langston

*Fame comes with a hefty price tag*

**L**ily is discovered by a big-name director when she's auditioning for a role in a tooth-paste commercial. He wants her for his new movie, which is great except for the fact that it's shooting in Los Angeles and Lily lives in Vancouver. With the help of her Chinese grandmother, she convinces her parents to let her go to LA with her agent as a chaperone. But when she gets there, she finds out that if she wants to be more than the flavor of the week, she's going to have to pay a price that may be way too high.

**Canadian Children's Book Centre Best Books starred selection**

“In Lily, Langston has created an authentic, lively character with whom readers will be able to relate. The realistic portrayal of the acting scenes also adds tension and depth to the story.” —*CM Magazine*

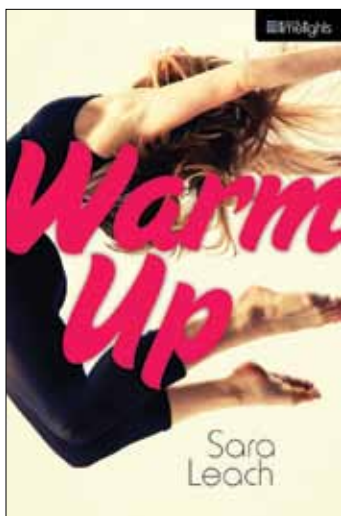
“Lily is a likeable character and readers will enjoy this story of her freshness...Readers who are interested in acting or the dream of a career in the arts will enjoy this story.” —*Resource Links*



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## Warm Up

Sara Leach

*Without passion, dance is just a bunch of steps.*

**J**asmine used to love dance. Now she struggles to hold on to that love as her dance team trains for a big competition. Her teammates are bickering, and when their teacher suggests that Jasmine might not have what it takes to be on the team, Jasmine is ready to quit. At a particularly rough practice, she channels her anger into her moves, surprising everyone, including herself, with how well she dances. But the team is still falling apart, and it's up to Jasmine to figure out a way to get her teammates to work together and celebrate the joy of dance.

**Sara Leach** is a writer and teacher-librarian in Whistler, British Columbia. She loves hiking the nearby alpine trails with her husband and two children. Fortunately, they have never been stranded in any mountain huts, although they have endured many rainy days. For more information, visit [www.saraleach.com](http://www.saraleach.com).

### Canadian Children's Book Centre Best Books selection

"Leach provides a compelling story of emotional growth while giving readers an authentic view of contemporary dance and competition...The smooth, graceful writing matches the subject nicely...As with most books from this publisher, its brevity never takes away from good storytelling." —*Booklist*

"A sweet story that will surely leave a smile on your face. Not only does it capture the beauty and emotion of dance, but also the power of friendship...You will not want to put the book down as you wait for the characters in the book to come together as a true team. This book is simply a sweet, refreshing breath of fresh air." —*SLJ Teen reviewer*

"Dancers will find this book enjoyable and non-dancers will learn about the finesse of the art... Jasmine's character shows great inner strength under adversity and is a positive model for teen girls on how to handle bullying." —*Southwestern Ohio Young Adult Materials Review Group*

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# Off Pointe

Leanne Lieberman

*Camp Dance is all about taking the types of risks Meg has spent her life avoiding.*

**W**hen Meg's summer ballet program is canceled and her ballet teacher suggests she attend Camp Dance to learn new dance styles, Meg is devastated. Worse still, her teacher thinks she lacks stage presence and needs to connect more with her audience. At camp, Meg struggles to learn contemporary dance. A girl named Logan, who is jealous of Meg's ballet technique and her friendship with Nio, a cute contemporary dancer, makes Meg's life even more difficult. When Meg, Nio and Logan have to work together to create a piece for the final show, arguments threaten to ruin their dance. Unless they are able to overcome their differences, Meg's time at Camp Dance will have been a disaster from start to finish.

**Leanne Lieberman** is the author of four books for young adults, *Gravity*, *The Book of Trees*, *Lauren Yanofsky Hates the Holocaust* and *Off Pointe*. She lives in Kingston, Ontario, with her husband and two sons. For more information, [www.leannelieberman.com](http://www.leannelieberman.com).

### Canadian Children's Book Centre Best Books selection

"A quick, easy, realistic read, ideal for reluctant readers interested in dance and a little romance."  
—*Booklist*

"Sure to hit the mark with readers looking for an informed and genuine approach to ballet and growing one's repertoire." —*Resource Links*

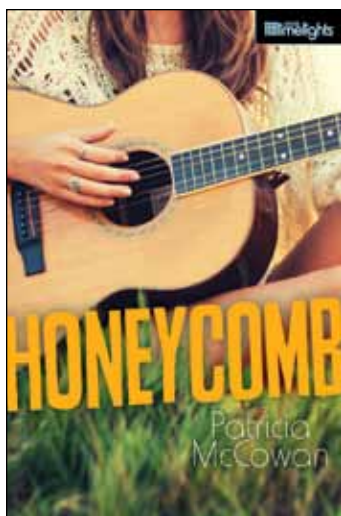
"Told from an easy-to-engage, first-person perspective...The journey may be bittersweet, but the message is one of hope and encouragement: no success without failure, no learning without doing, no joy without daring." —*VOYA*



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## Honeycomb

Patricia McCowan

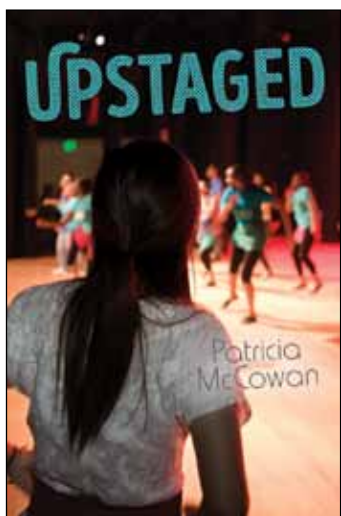
*How can Nat create harmony when she doesn't trust her own voice?*

**W**hen Nat, her best friend Jess and singing-star wannabe Harper sing together, their harmonies bring down the house. For Nat, the experience sparks a driving new desire to perform. But when the girls form a trio and enter a contest for a chance to play at the Tall Grass Music Festival, Nat finds that harmony—musical and otherwise—is hard to maintain. Her bandmates almost never agree, her new boyfriend starts behaving more like a non-boyfriend, and the trio's famous-musician mentor doesn't even like the way Nat breathes. Every day, Nat's dream of performing at Tall Grass seems farther away, and she questions whether she has what it takes to get there.

**Canadian Children's Book Centre Best Books selection**

"Emphasize[s] the necessity of cooperation and persistence, as well as the importance of education and family... Will appeal to reluctant readers, especially those with an interest in the performing arts." —*School Library Journal*

"With minimal adult guidance, the girls learn specific elements of their craft, how to navigate opportunities in the music industry and how to work together, even coming to understand that their arguments are a natural part of the music-making process. A fast-paced narrative set to the tune of talented-teen melodrama." —*Kirkus Reviews*



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160 pages · ages 11–14

## Upstaged

Patricia McCowan

*It's hard to shine when you're surrounded by stars.*

**E**llie is used to getting leading roles in her small-town school's musicals, but her place at center stage disappears when her dad becomes the host of a breakfast TV show and they have to move to the big city. When Ellie auditions for—and lands—a spot with the Youth Works Theater Company, she comes up against a tight-knit group of talented, experienced and competitive triple-threat performers. Not only does she not get a lead, but she has to share a role with Marissa, a company veteran who seems determined to do all she can to outshine Ellie. Out of her depth and far from all that she's known, Ellie wonders just what she has to do to stop feeling upstaged by everyone around her.

"[McCowan] presents an accurate account of a theater company, with its off-site, dress, and technical rehearsals, and a convincingly diverse urban cast of secondary characters... A nifty story for theater fans." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"A quick read, and the frequent references to current and classic musical titles will appeal to readers who fancy the limelight for themselves." —*Booklist*



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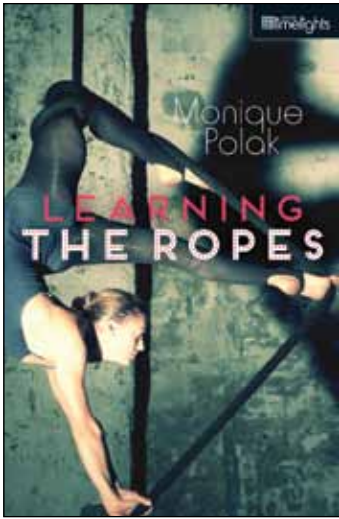
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## Learning the Ropes

Monique Polak

*You can't make it to the top if you're afraid to fall.*

**M**andy dreams of a career in the circus, working as an aerialist who specializes in rope climbing. When she is accepted into the prestigious Montreal Circus College summer program, she feels that she is finally on her way to fulfilling her dreams. At circus camp she is befriended—and challenged—by young circus performers from around the world. Circus camp turns out to be a magical combination of work and play, but when a veteran aerialist is killed in a fall, Mandy must confront the reality of circus life.

*Learning the Ropes* is **Monique Polak**'s seventeenth novel for young adults. Her historical novel *What World is Left* won the 2009 Quebec Writers' Federation Prize for Children's and Young Adult Literature. Monique is also a journalist whose work appears regularly in the *Montreal Gazette* and in Postmedia publications across Canada. She has been teaching English literature and humanities at Marianopolis College in Montreal, Quebec, for thirty years. Monique lives in Montreal with her husband. For more information, visit [www.moniquepolak.com](http://www.moniquepolak.com).

"An inspirational story...[that] tackles more than perseverance and ambition...[including] female competition, body image, and the pressure of gender expectations for young girls in society... The [Orca Limelights] stories are quick, bite-sized reads, but they pack a punch—the well-developed stories have relatable characters and entertaining plots. This book will appeal to a diverse audience of young female readers." —VOYA

"With her strong dialogue and consistent narrative voice, Monique Polak succeeds in convincing the reader that a fifteen-year-old really is telling the story... Even if the YA reader is not interested in circus arts or gymnastics, this book is still a guaranteed fun read." —*Montreal Review of Books*

"One of a growing number of novellas focused on teens trying to become professional entertainers, and the choice of the circus as its subject certainly pops the book out of the norm. Full of interesting and varied characters, the story stands up well, and the author describes the difficult aerial maneuvers vividly. A quick read with a fascinating focus." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"Will hook readers from the first chapter... True to life and easy to grasp... A suspenseful plot, fascinating details, and a likable protagonist make this title a wonderful addition to hi-lo collections." —*School Library Journal*

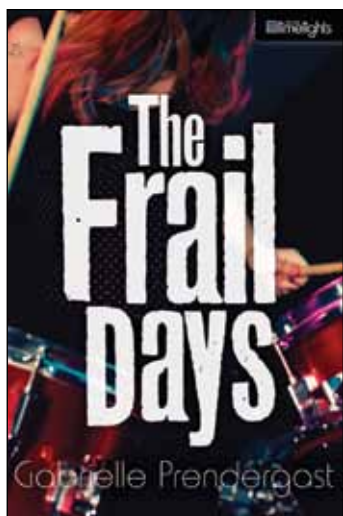


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## The Frail Days

Gabrielle Prendergast

*Stella Wing wants to rock, but everyone else wants to rap.*

**S**ixteen-year-old drummer Stella, guitarist Jacob and bassist Miles need a wild singer for their old-school rock band. When they discover nerdy Tamara Donnelly, who nails the national anthem at a baseball game, Stella is not convinced Tamara's sound is right for the band. Stella wants to turn Tamara into a rock goddess, but Tamara proves to be a confident performer who has her own ideas about music and what it means to be cool. When their band, the Frail Days, starts to build a local following, Stella and Tamara clash over the direction the band should take, forcing them to consider what true musical collaboration means.

**Gabrielle Prendergast** is a UK-born Canadian/Australian who lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, with her husband and daughter. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of British Columbia. A part-time teacher and mentor, Gabrielle is the author of the verse novels *Capricious* and *Audacious*, which was shortlisted for a CLA Award. Gabrielle blogs and rants at [www.angelhorn.com](http://www.angelhorn.com) and [www.versenovels.com](http://www.versenovels.com).

“Prendergast displays excellent insight into what makes young artists tick in this short novella. Characterization is deftly done: Stella has an attractively rebellious edge to her personality, and Tamara's character grows naturally in confidence. Punchy, insightful and great for music lovers.”  
—*Kirkus Reviews*

“The dialogue is authentic, and the vocabulary is varied, interesting and appropriate for the intended audience. Characters are realistic, and the plot is believable. The theme of performing and finding a voice is well explored in this novel...*The Frail Days* would appeal to a variety of readers, including readers of music, relationships and realistic fiction. Highly Recommended.”  
—*CM Magazine*

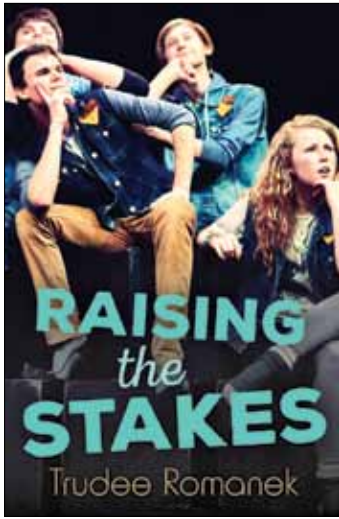
“While the themes are serious, the lively first person narrative by the iconoclastic Stella (piercings, fire-engine red hair, different fake tattoos every week) makes this a dynamic and funny novel.”  
—*Resource Links*



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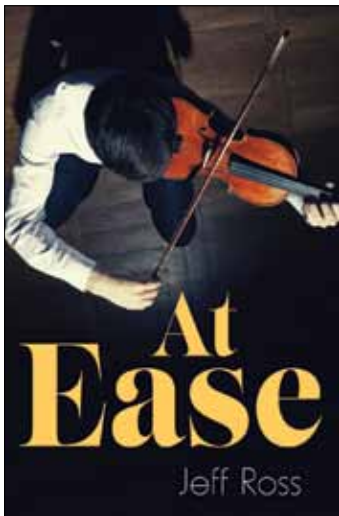
## Raising the Stakes

Trudee Romanek

*Chloe only wants to help her teammates improve.  
So why are they all mad at her?*

**I**t's the start of a new season for Harrington High's improv team—and Chloe is determined that this will be the year they make it all the way to the top. Her teammates (who also happen to be her closest friends) are a talented bunch, and she knows they can do it. They have to. Because getting to nationals is Chloe's best chance to prove—to her parents, to the improv scouts and, most of all, to herself—that she has what it takes to succeed. Chloe is doing everything she can to help her teammates perform better. So why are they all mad at her?

"The flow of this book is very smooth and transitions well between the various characters. Romanek provides great information through the characters on the subject of improv. While the reluctant reader will enjoy this book, it may attract other readers who are interested in this topic and may go the extra step in researching it." —VOYA



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## At Ease

Jeff Ross

*All Will wants to do is make music.  
Too bad an audience is part of the deal.*

**A**t fifteen, Will already knows he wants to spend his life playing classical violin. And when he is invited to take part in a summer program for young musicians, he realizes it is a chance to make his dream a reality. But years of playing only for Mr. Jorgensen, his elderly neighbor and mentor, haven't prepared Will for what will happen when he steps onto the stage. He never expected the self-doubt that takes over his thoughts, or the fear of failure that makes his hands shake and his heart race. What happens when the one thing you need to achieve your dreams is something you find utterly terrifying?

### Canadian Children's Book Centre Best Books selection

"This entry in the Orca Limelights series should find an audience with those in the performing arts, especially fans of Sara Zarr's *The Lucy Variations* (2013), Gayle Forman's *If I Stay* (2009), and other tales of musical prodigies." —*Booklist* online

"Insightful and utterly readable...[The] characters are drawn subtly and with a light touch. It makes for a well-coordinated performance." —*Resource Links*



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## Big Time

Tom Ryan

*Sometimes you have to fail before you can succeed.*

**G**erri waits outside all night to audition for *Big Time*, her favorite TV singing competition. She believes she has a shot at success, but when she's insulted by one of the judges and kicked out of the competition, she thinks she'll probably never sing again. After a teacher at her school asks her to join a choral club, Gerri reluctantly gets involved. Even though she can't read music and she doesn't know the other kids, she finds herself enjoying the group and learning a lot about music. A cute guy she met at the *Big Time* auditions joins the group, and when they perform their unique mashups at an open-mic night, Gerri realizes there's more than one way to be a successful—and happy—singer!

**Junior Library Guild selection**

**Canadian Children's Book Centre Best Books selection**

"Readers will want to ride along for the high hopes and disappointments, as well as the self-discovery that is part of Gerri's journey to embrace and polish her talent." —*Publishers Weekly*

"A feel-good story that is all about a love of music and following one's dreams." —*CM Magazine*

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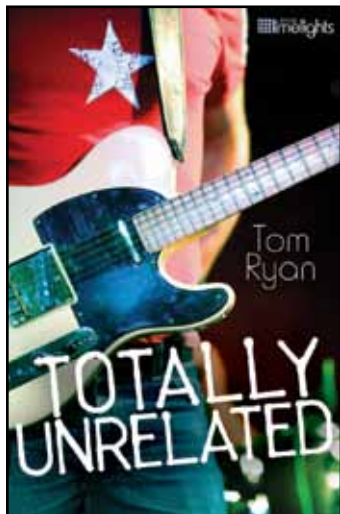
Finnish book club\*

Norwegian book club\*

Swedish book club\*

German book club\*

\* Stabenfeldt



## Totally Unrelated

Tom Ryan

*When you step into the spotlight, you have to expect some heat.*

**N**eil plays guitar with his family's band, the Family McClintock, even though he can't stand the Celtic music they play, he doesn't dance, he hates the outfits, and every single performance reminds him that he isn't as talented as the rest of the family. When his buddy Bert convinces him to form a rock band and enter a local talent show, Neil's playing improves and everyone notices. He starts to think that all those years of practice might come in handy after all. But it all comes to a head when Neil has to choose between an important gig with the family band and the talent show. He's only sure of one thing: whatever he decides to do, he's going to be letting someone down..

**Junior Library Guild selection**

**Canadian Children's Book Centre Best Books selection**

**Hackmatack Children's Choice Award nominee**

"Ryan writes well, and there's a positive underlying message about following your own path while honouring other responsibilities and commitments." —*Quill & Quire*

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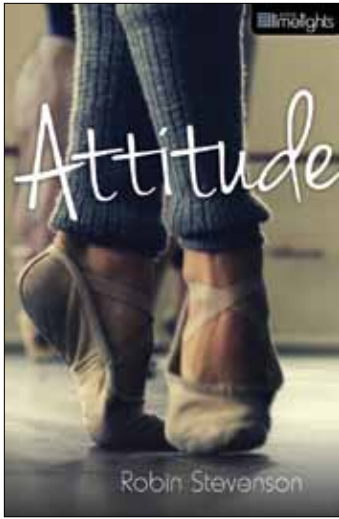
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## Attitude

Robin Stevenson

*There's more to ballet than pink pointe shoes and tutus.*

**W**hen Cassie comes to Vancouver from Australia for an intensive summer program at a prestigious ballet school, she finds it hard to fit in. A clique of girls who have been at the school a long time don't want the newcomers to get any attention. At first Cassie tries to go along to get along, but when she realizes that some of the visiting summer students are being bullied and threatened, and that she herself is being sabotaged, she finally speaks out—and finds out how far some girls will go to succeed.

**Robin Stevenson** is the author of multiple books for children and teens. She spends most of her time writing, hanging out with her homeschooled son, and teaching creative writing to adults, teens and kids. She lives in Victoria, British Columbia, with her family. For more information, visit [www.robinstevenson.com](http://www.robinstevenson.com). Robin loves to hear from readers—and she always writes back.

### Canadian Children's Book Centre Best Books selection

"Stevenson creates an authentic picture of what it is like for young dancers participating in ballet programs...The novel is engaging and rich with detail about the competitive world of aspiring dancers, and readers who are dancers, or who have an interest in dance, will appreciate this fascinating behind-the-scenes look at ballet...This innovative series offers something for all kinds of readers whether they are directly involved in the performing arts or not. They are short, fast-paced and well executed." —*Canadian Children's Book News*



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## Forcing the Ace

Erin Thomas

*Sometimes the real magic happens offstage.*

**A**lex wants to enter the Silver Stage magic competition, but he needs a sponsor. Jack, a veteran card wizard, is willing to take on the role, but only if Alex agrees to team up with Zoe, another young magician—and Alex’s rival. Working with Jack and sharing the spotlight with Zoe, Alex comes to see that there are other ways to be a magician besides competing—and that magic is about entertaining people, not fooling them.

**Erin Thomas** is the author of several books for children and teens. She lives in Whitby, Ontario, with her husband, their daughter, a small gray cat and a large black dog. For more information, visit [www.erinthomas.ca](http://www.erinthomas.ca).

“Short sentences and chapters make this perfect for reluctant readers. Within that format, the author is able to create interesting characters and a convincing story. Eventually, Alex comes full circle, learning that performing magic is a way to bring joy to others rather than performing for the sake of winning. This book is a perfect addition to libraries needing hi/lo titles.”  
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“Thomas has researched extensively, and magic becomes an effective backdrop for well-written characters and intriguing plotting. This novel is a convincing sleight of hand, with a carefully finessed reveal of meaningful life lessons.” —*Resource Links*


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Telephone: (416) 488 9214 · Fax (416) 488 4531  
[amy@transatlanticagency.com](mailto:amy@transatlanticagency.com) • [www.transatlanticagency.com](http://www.transatlanticagency.com)



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