

Magic Ballerina



Holly and the Dancing Cat



Holly's
ADVENTURES

Darcey Bussell

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Holly and the Dancing Cat

«HarperCollins»

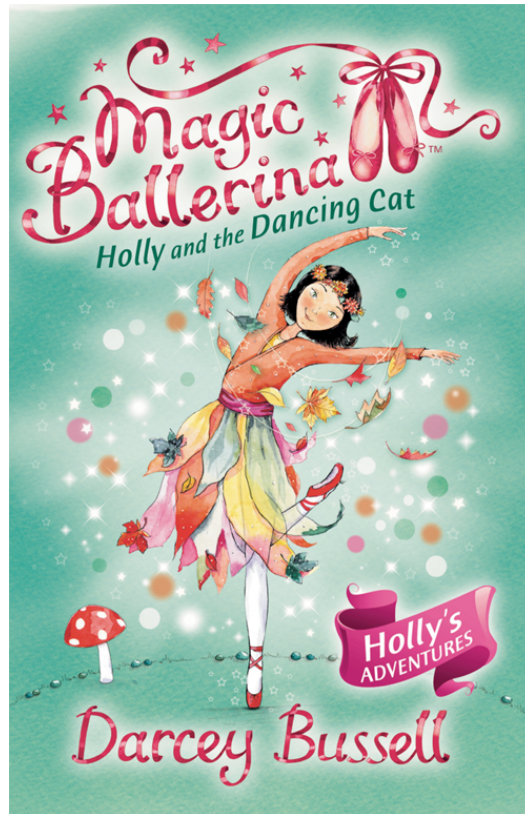
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Return to the magical world of Enchantia in the captivating third series of Magic Ballerina by Darcey Bussell! When Holly is given a pair of red ballet shoes by Rosa, little does she know – they are magic! She finds herself transported to the magical world of Enchantia where she meets the beautiful White Cat, who promises to be her guide. It isn't until he goes missing that Holly realises just how important and special he really is. Can she solve the mystery and save the White Cat or is he lost in time forever?

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Magic Ballerina™

Holly and the Dancing Cat



Darcey Bussell

HarperCollinsChildren'sBooks

To Phoebe and Zoe, as they are the inspiration behind Magic Ballerina.



Welcome to the world of Enchantia!

I have always loved to dance. The captivating music and wonderful stories of ballet are so inspiring. So come with me and let's follow Holly on her magical adventures in Enchantia, where the stories of dance will take you on a very special journey.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to be "D. Bussell".

p.s. Turn to the back to learn a special dance step from me ...



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Map



Prologue

In the soft, pale light, the girl stood with her head bent and her hands held lightly in front of her. There was a moment's silence and then the first notes of the music began. For as long as the girl could remember music had seemed to tell her of another world – a magical, exciting world – that lay far, far away. She always felt if she could just close her eyes and lose herself, then she would get there. Maybe this time. As the music swirled inside her, she swept her arms above her head, rose on to her toes and began to dance ...



Holly Wilde swept her arms in a circle and danced forward with slow steps to the haunting, beautiful music. She stopped on her right leg, one arm above her head, the other out to the side. She paused, before gracefully bringing her arm down and moving around her bedroom, turning slowly again and again, lost in her dance.

Holly loved the ballet of *Sleeping Beauty*. Most people remembered the *Rose Adagio*, the famous dance that the princess did before she pricked her finger, but Holly had always preferred the piece of music she was dancing to now, where *Sleeping Beauty* appeared to the prince in a magic vision. It had a lilting, slightly ghostly melody. Sweeping her arms upwards, she pirouetted around as the music came to an end. She stopped, trembling with the joy of dancing. Closing her eyes, she imagined that she had just danced off stage and that the audience were clapping wildly.

Just like they did when Mum danced it in New York ...

Sinking down on to her bed, Holly glanced at the photoframe on the chest of drawers of her mum, Bella. Her eyes, the same mossy-green as Holly's, were shining. Her dark hair was caught up in a diamond tiara.



Holly picked the picture up, her own straight dark hair falling forward across her face. Her heart ached. *Oh Mum*, she thought, for about the thousandth time, *why did you have to leave me here? Why couldn't I have stayed with you?*

She remembered the day she had come to live at Aunt Maria's and Uncle Ted's, back in July. She heard her mum's words as she had left: "I'll miss you so much, darling. But you're ten now and you can't keep on travelling around with me, you need to stay in one place, go to one school and make friends. Aunt Maria and Uncle Ted will look after you and in the holidays you can come and join me or your dad just as you always have."

"But I don't want to stay here," Holly had protested.

"I know," her mum had said softly, tears in her eyes. "But you have to. We'll see each other soon."



She had kissed Holly and then she had gone. She had phoned and emailed lots, but she was touring America and it was so far away that Holly hadn't been able to visit her. She had seen her dad for a few weeks in August when he had been performing in London. He was a dancer too, but he and her mum had got divorced six years ago, so she only ever saw him separately.

And now here she was. Midway through a new term and taking ballet classes after school. She'd started at Madame Za-Za's just before the summer holidays, but she hadn't really made much of an effort to make friends with any of the other girls. She had just felt too unhappy and, anyway, with all the moving round she'd done in her life, she'd learned it was better not to make friends. You only ended up having to say goodbye. And so she'd kept herself pretty much to herself in Madame Za-Za's class, concentrating on her ballet and coldly brushing off all the other girls' offers of friendship. To her relief, they had quickly decided to leave her alone.

Well, all apart from one ...

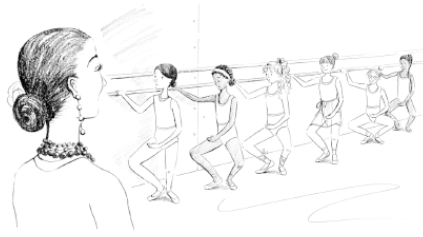
Rosa Maitland had been really friendly. She'd left to go to the Royal Ballet School in London, but before she'd gone, she had given Holly a pair of old red ballet shoes. Holly kept them on a shelf above her desk. The words Rosa had said as she had pushed them into Holly's hands echoed through her head: "I hope you find out how special they are."

Holly frowned and, getting up, went over to them. They were old and the leather was very soft, but there didn't seem to be anything that special about them as far as she could see. Picking them up, she felt a tingle, like the faintest electric shock. Maybe she'd try them on again anyway ...



"Holly! Time to go to ballet!" Aunt Maria's voice called up the stairs. Holly put the shoes down on her desk and hurried out of the room. Head up, shoulders down, extend the arms, remember to smile ...

Holly and the other girls in her class at Madame Za-Za's ballet school went through the familiar sequence of exercises, first at the *barre* and then in the centre of the room.



Holly worked hard. Madame Za-Za was a very elegant woman with greying-brown hair held up in a loose bun and lots of bangles. Holly knew Madame Za-Za had been a prima ballerina when she was younger. Her mum had said what an amazing teacher she was, but although Holly worked hard, she longed to be back with her mum, learning from her instead.

“Into pairs,” Madame Za-Za called as she turned to change the music on the CD player.

There was usually an even number of girls in the class so someone always had to go with Holly, but that day one of the girls was away and she was left on her own, the other girls pairing up quickly. Eventually there were just two of the newer girls left, Chloe and Alyssia. They raced past where Holly was standing in the middle to take each other's hands. As they met up, they smiled in relief.

Holly felt a pang. She didn't want to make friends, but it was hard to be left out quite so obviously. Chloe happened to glance at her and looked suddenly guilty. “Holly, you could come with us ... make a three,” she called impulsively.

Holly heard the horror in Alyssia's hiss. “Chloe!”

“No thanks,” said Holly, folding her arms and turning away.

Just then, Madame Za-Za looked round. “Ah, Holly, you haven't got a partner. Why don't you ...”

“I'll dance on my own,” Holly interrupted. No one ever interrupted Madame Za-Za, who was quite strict, but Holly couldn't bear the thought of being made to join a pair and watch the other two girls exchange looks. She knew she sounded haughty, but she didn't care.

Madame Za-Za raised an eyebrow. “Very well,” she said, her eyes sweeping back to the other girls. “Now everyone, I'd like you to listen to this piece of music and imagine you are two leaves on the branch of a tree in autumn, fluttering in the breeze, about to fall ...”



Holly danced on her own. *I don't care. I don't care.* She kept repeating the words in her head as she let the music flow over her, taking her away and making her feel like she was falling on the breeze, turning around, using her movements to express the feelings of wistfulness and sadness inside her.

I don't want to be friends with any of them anyway. I don't need them, she thought and then she lost herself in the music and thought no more.

“Very good expressive work, Holly,” Madame Za-Za praised at the end.

Holly gave her a small, tight smile. Now that the dancing was over she wanted to get out of there as quickly as possible. As soon as Madame Za-Za dismissed them, Holly hurried away.

I'll put Sleeping Beauty on again, she told herself as she changed out of her ballet shoes. Her muscles were aching from hard work, but she knew the one thing that would make her feel better was dancing.

Cramming her stuff into her bag, she left the changing rooms.

“Holly, wait!” she heard a voice call as she half-ran down the corridor.

She turned round and saw Chloe, coming out of the changing rooms. “I’m sorry you had to dance on your own today,” she said. She hesitated. “Um, you could always come round to mine sometime. I don’t know many people here, either.”



Holly was sure she saw pity in Chloe’s blue eyes. Unhappiness swept through her. How dare Chloe pity her! She’d travelled all over the world and met more ballet dancers than Chloe could even dream of.

“Why don’t you ask your mum if you can come round for tea next week?” Chloe suggested.

Holly’s temper exploded. “I’m hardly likely to ask my mum when she’s in America, am I? Anyway, I don’t want to be friends with you or with anyone here. Just leave me alone!”

And, swinging round, Holly stormed out of the front door.



The Dancing Cat



Holly ran down the drive of the ballet school, her feet slipping slightly on the fallen leaves. It was October now and the sun was low in the sky.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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