

Reader's Guide for *When the Music Stops- Dance On*

(Conforms to the Common Core State Standards ELA-6-12)

Dance is a delicate balance between perfection and beauty. anonymous

Pre-Reading

What loss or obstacles have you experienced that caused you to change direction in your life? What negative and positive actions/reactions did you experience within yourself?

Key Discussion Questions

1. Marta, the protagonist in the story goes through a period of depression when she first arrives home to begin her recovery. What events were turning points in her life that moved her to make positive changes?
2. Relationships play a key role in most stories as they do in real life. Consider the relationships listed below. Examine how Marta used or ignored the advice and support each offered her.

Marta and Lynne	Marta and her mom
Marta and Steve	Marta and Dennis
Marta and Sam	Marta and Lindsay

Share your ideas of what Marta could have done to improve each relationship.
3. Marta experienced several romantic relationship issues. How did her methods of handling herself lead to misunderstandings? In the end do you think she made the best choice? Support your answer with evidence from the book.
4. What changes in daily life have occurred between the late 1950's and now. Include how you feel the changes in technology, housing, part-time jobs for people her age, transportation, and other issues affected her decisions.

Post-Reading

Tenacity is a requirement when you must make a significant change in the direction of your goals. What persons helped you adjust your thinking when you faced significant changes? What did they say or do that made a difference and propel you to make the needed changes?

Creative Writing Prompts (2)

1. Change is difficult after we think we are on a path that promises a chance to fulfill our goals. Marta faced a dramatic change after her injury.

Write a one-page description of a goal you wanted to accomplish but were unable to attain. Explain how you dealt with the problems that followed and how those around you supported you or failed to support you. Be specific.

2. Watch a ballet or several excerpts from a ballet. Share your impressions of how the dancers shared the story through movement and mime as well as your

favorite sections of choreography. Write your impression as if you were a dance critic or a newspaper writer assigned to share comments about the ballet.

Internet Resources/Connections

Online sites change, upgrade and also become obsolete. Current valid sites include:

Ballet Dance Terms: www.ballethub.com/ballet-terms-dictionary

You Tube: Watch excerpts/ entire ballets by searching the title of the ballet.

YouTube: Ballet company information and shared videos:

Pacific Northwest Ballet, New York City Ballet, Kirov Ballet, Bolshoi Ballet

Related Reading

Finding personal strength is a common theme in literature. Current books of interest include:

Dancing Through It: My Journey in The Ballet by Jenifer Ringer

Unbroken by Laura Hillerbrand

One man's courage through a shipwreck and a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp.

Selected Interdisciplinary Activities

Bridge: Psychology

When we experience life-changing situations we often pass through the 7 stages of grief: shock or disbelief, denial, anger, bargaining, guilt, depression, followed by acceptance and hope.

Identify the order in which Marta experienced at least four of these stages during her recovery. Share the stages where her life stalled, preventing her from moving on. (Extra credit: Explain why she did or did not skip any of the stages.)

Bridge: Language Arts

Knowing your strengths and then losing them through injury or other means may leave you depressed or cause you to lose hope.

Compare the way Marta handled herself with other fiction or nonfiction characters you've read about. Discuss how both rebuilt their skills or changed direction.

Bridge: Music, Ballet, Choreography- Theatre Arts (3 ideas)

Many ballets are story ballets: they have a beginning a middle and an end with main characters and villains in tangible settings. Some of the best known story ballets are: *Sleeping Beauty*, *Coppelia*, *Nutcracker*, *Cinderella* and *Firebird*.

Some ballets are celebrate movement to music. Balanchine is a common choreographer for this type of ballet. Suggestions to watch:

Stravinsky's Agon or *Violin Concerto*

Tchaikovsky's Allegro Brillante or *Theme and Variations*

Jewels by Faure, *Stravinsky* and *Tchaikovsky*

1. Watch a story ballet and a non-story ballet. Name 4-6 similarities/differences you feel or see as you watch them. Which impacts you more? Explain why you feel that way.
2. Play selected music from a story ballet or a non-story ballet and explain the relationship of the music to the choreography. Use/ explain 4-6 ballet terms.
3. Dance a story ballet excerpt or a non-story classical music excerpt with your class or a group of friends. Be prepared to relate information about the composer, the choreographer and any pertinent information related to the music and dance such as famous dancers who made it popular. Write a summary of your experience.

This reading guide is created by the author to further the use of the book in classrooms. Any errors are unintentional and belong to the author, Paddy Eger.

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