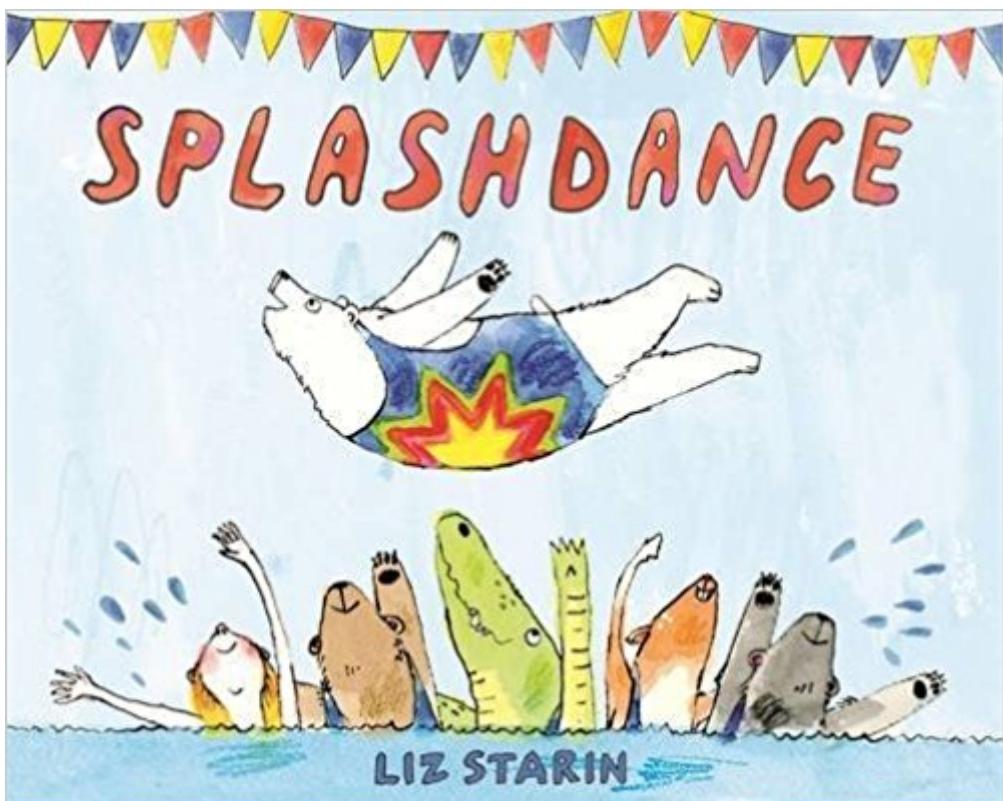


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# Splashdance: A Picture Book



## **Synopsis**

Ursula, a bear, and Ricardo, a human, are preparing for the water ballet competition, where the prize is a million dollars! But a new regulation at the community pool--no bears--leaves Ursula cut from the contest. Luckily, she encounters a group of undaunted animal swimmers at a local pond, and Ursula and her new team figure out a way to participate in the competition and make sure everyone is welcome at the pool once and for all. Filled with deadpan humor, adorable animals, and big themes about social justice and inclusion, *Splashdance* is a fun and splashy summer story with a lot of heart.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 390 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR) (June 21, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0374300984

ISBN-13: 978-0374300982

Product Dimensions: 10.2 x 0.4 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #502,990 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #34 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Tolerance #121 in Books > Children's Books > Sports & Outdoors > Water Sports #1027 in Books > Children's Books > Animals > Bears

Age Range: 4 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 2

## **Customer Reviews**

PreS-Gr 2 Ursula, a polar bear, and her human friend, Ricardo, are set to enter a water ballet contest until a new rule bans bears from the pool. When Ursula shows up next day disguised as a rabbit, she discovers Ricardo has deserted her for a new partner. Although immersed in sadness, Ursula begins to practice her ballet moves in the neighborhood pond, where she meets a group of performers, including a brown bear named Ralph, who are also barred from the contest. Together they perfect their routine and hatch a plan. After all the contestants perform on the big day, Ricardo and his giraffe partner are declared winners. But they are overlooked when a chorus of

"Readyâ€”Setâ€”Gooooooooo!" announces the unauthorized entrance of Ursula and her water ballet companions, who dazzle the audience with their "complicated routine" and Ursula's "triple banana flip" finale. Although they have not won this contest, Ralph assures Ursula they have indeed scored a victory, for a page turn reveals a new pool rule: "Everyone Welcome!" The watercolor and crayon illustrations greatly enrich the brief text and add many touches of humor, from the title page scene of bear and human enclosed in separate shower curtains to a list of such pool rules as "no frolicking; no lollygagging; [and] no filibustering." Ursula's rabbit costume and home furnishings as well as announcements on signs and T-shirts afford added chuckles. Alert readers can even check out the title on the rabbit lifeguard's book. VERDICT The message that loyalty and inclusiveness are important is a valuable one to share with children. Don't hesitate to jump into this pool. •Marianne Saccardi, Children's Literature Consultant, Cambridge, MA

What starts as a loopy tale about an interspecies water ballet competition gradually reveals itself to be a call for solidarity and resistance in the face of injustice . . . Ursula, with her ability to turn personal betrayal into collective triumph, may remind adult readers of the heroines of ShondaLand. • Publishers Weekly, starred review, "Best Summer Books 2016" "The straightfaced silliness of the premise guarantees laughs, but there's also real tenderness . . . The use of bears as this world's scapegoat and the randomness of their ban may give kids new insights into the concept of prejudice as well, and the book comfortably and capably mixes absurdity with pathos . . . Perfect for poolside reading or for storytimes about swimming, summer, or the Olympics, Ursula's story is a real winner. • The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books "A creative spin on inclusivity can issue never before approached through agile polar-bear paw positions or the graceful lifting of camels in the air. Starin's anthropomorphized cats, chickens, crocs, and more (along with amusing asides in the background) steal the show. It's a consciously silly pretense, but discussion possibilities abound, and there's no question it's funny. • Kirkus Reviews "The message that loyalty and inclusiveness are important is a valuable one to share with children. Don't hesitate to jump into this pool. • School Library Journal

every kid should have this book. such a beautiful lesson in life!

Good story about disappointments and triumphs. Illustrations are wonderful. My 3 and 5 year old

granddaughters really enjoyed it.

This joyful story is told through language and illustrations that are at once playful and powerful. At times the plot is advanced seamlessly and engagingly through illustration alone, and readers will love noting all the quirky details that round out the setting and characters, like titles on a bookshelf, swimming paraphernalia, and the hilarious names of water ballet maneuvers. Children will root for the underdog team of animal water ballerinas restricted from the municipal pool on account of "No Bears Allowed!" and eagerly engage in discussion about topics ranging from frustration and fairness to segregation and inclusivity.

This is a fun and quirky book about inclusion. When Ursula, the polar bear, is no longer permitted to practice her water ballet at the community pool, she can't train for the water ballet contest with Ricardo. He gets a new partner. So, Ursula, after a week of crying, gets innovative and goes down to the pond where she swims with the other animals. They form a team. They don't win the million \$ prize for water ballet, but the team manages to take down the "No Bears" sign at the community pool. This book is a great way to talk about INCLUSION. One of our primary needs is a feeling of belonging, and this shows children how great it is to include folks so they belong. Illustrations look watercolorish, and are whimsical and fun.

One MILLION dollars! That is the prize awarded to the winners of the water ballet competition at the community pool. So Ricardo, a mustachioed, knobby-kneed gentleman and his water ballet partner Ursula, a well-groomed but furry polar bear practice their routine diligently. All at once, a new rule bans bears from the pool, and Ricardo summarily ditches Ursula for a new partner, a giraffe named Hortense. Ursula is devastated at the betrayal and heartbroken to lose her chance in the competition. After all, she really loves water ballet! Eventually Ursula dons a striped bikini and she sneaks down to the community pond for a quick dip. Alone, she executes her best double back albatross and half twist chanterelle in the weedy green swimming hole. Then one day Ursula arrives at the pond only to meet a large group of water ballet enthusiasts practicing their routine. They, too, were cast out of the pool due to their ursine members. This group - this TEAM - has stuck together and continued to practice. Ursula is inspired to join them, and she devises a plan to ensure that they can participate in the water ballet championship after all. Starin's text is smart, vibrant and playful. A balanced mixture of short and long sentences filled with cut-to-the-chase emotions keeps the storyline popping along. Young listeners will remain eager to turn the page and

discover what happens next. Starin's illustrations are spectacularly funny, inventive and ridiculous, adding implausible wacky details that appeal to the eye and the funnybone. Clever signs, wild bathing costumes, and a hilarious menagerie of swimming critters mix together to produce a divinely humorous tale. Ursula finally gets to perform her impressive triple banana flip in the water ballet competition but will it be enough to win the million dollars? Or is there an even bigger prize at stake? *Splashdance* is a lighthearted, inspiring winner from beginning to end.

fabulous story about working hard at what you love, creativity, and the true meaning of being a team (which is worth much more than a million bucks). i felt briefly sorry for ricardo at the end :) hilarious and inspired illustrations!

Amazing book, great for kids!

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