

I AM THE BLACK SWAN

我是黑天鵝

A little boy who loves ballet and who is not afraid of hard work, dances beautifully. His dream is to be the Black Swan and do the very difficult continuous pirouettes. When people say that only girls can dance the Black Swan, he feels frustrated. After all, there are male black swans, aren't there?



Amin can't wait to get up on Saturdays and go to his favorite place – the ballet school. He doesn't care about getting sore feet and bruised knees, or about being laughed at. He just wants to be the Black Swan in the ballet show. But the others tell him only girls can dance the Black Swan, and even though he has practiced until he can do the difficult pirouettes, the teacher gives him the part of the prince. He is so frustrated, but what can he do?

Children's dreams should not be limited by gender or any other external conditions. The hope is that the little boy in this book will help readers to break through gender barriers, and enjoy the beauty of ballet at the same time!

Text by Liu Ching-Yen 劉清彥

A journalist by training, Liu Ching-Yen has always maintained a love for children's literature. He spends most of his time translating and writing children's books. Liu Ching-Yen travels frequently both in Taiwan and abroad to speak to grownups who also love story books. He has also hosted a children's television program, winning a prize for best children's presenter in 2013. His greatest wish is to be a little magpie himself and spread the seed of reading around the globe.

Illustrated by Chang Pei-Yu 張培瑜

Currently living in Germany, where she works in illustration, picture book creation, and book design, Chang Pei-Yu is a lecturer in the Illustration Department at the University of Münster. Winner of a

silver medal from the 3x3 International Illustration Award (USA), and selected for the Most Beautiful German Books, and the Bratislava Biennial of Illustration. Her picture books in German include *Hundebraten Süßsauer*, *Mr. Benjamin's Suitcase of Secrets* (*Der geheimnisvolle Koffer von Herrn Benjamin*), *Snow for Everyone* (*Wem gehört der Schnee?*).



I AM THE BLACK SWAN

Translated by Helen Wang

p.6-7

On Saturdays, Amin gets up bright and early.
He doesn't need Mum to wake him.

p.8-9

He brushes his teeth,
washes his face,
gets dressed,
and goes downstairs for breakfast.

p.10-11

HAIR SALON

Men Women Children

Flowers

TEA HOUSE

Closed

Then, he skips and leaps all the way
to his favourite place.

p.12-13

Amin warms up.

p.14-15

His steps are soft and light.
His spins are fast and balanced.
He leaps through the air like a dolphin.

p.16-17

Amin doesn't care that his feet are sore,
or that his knees are bruised,
or that he has to do the same movements over and over again.
All he thinks about...



p.18-19

... is being in this year's show.

[top of the poster] The 21st Annual Ballet Show

p.20-21

Amin practises whenever he can, wherever he can.

He knows which role he wants in the show.

He doesn't care if people point at him

He doesn't care if they laugh at him

or call him Ballerina Boy.

p.22-23

[shop signs] Cameras / Herbal Medicine

He spins around

and around and around.

He practises and practises

until he can do several pirouettes in a row.

p.24-25

At last, audition day comes.

The teacher asks: "What will you dance for us?"

"The Black Swan's pirouettes," says Amin.

p.26-27

Everyone stares at him.

[pink speech bubble] A boy as the Black Swan?

[yellow speech bubble] That's outrageous!

[grey speech bubble] It's impossible!

It's disgusting!

Amin was sad. He stayed in his room. He had done the difficult pirouettes, but the teacher wanted him to dance the Prince.

p.28-29

At rehearsals, Amin's feet were as heavy as lead.

He couldn't raise his legs, or spin around, or leap in the air, and at one point, he almost caused Anna, the Black Swan, to fall.



p.30-31

When the other children went home, Amin stayed behind.

"What's wrong?" asked the teacher.

"How come Anna can dance the Black Swan, and I can't?"

"Because the Black Swan is female."

"But there are male black swans as well."

The teacher smiled.

She whispered something to Amin.

Then Amin smiled too.

p.32-33

On the day of the ballet show, Amin was a handsome and charming Prince.

When the white swans gathered around, he lifted the princess as high as he could.

And he did wonderful leaps in the air.

The curtain fell

to thunderous applause

And the audience roared,

"Encore! Encore!"

p.34-35

The music started, and the curtain rose,

and a black swan flew on to the stage.

He leapt so high, and span so fast

And even did those difficult pirouettes.

He was enchanting!

p.36-37

[audience] Amin's a rising star!

Amin took a deep bow

The audience gave him a standing ovation

and cheered "Bravo!"

[audience] Amin's such a handsome prince!

[audience] Amin's a genius!

"I am the Black Swan!"

whispered Amin.

