



THE DAY DANCER FLEW

Written by Tiffany Stone | Illustrated by Brittany Lane

TIME: ~45 minutes (reading and discussion – 25-30; activity - 15-20)

MATERIALS: The Day the Dancer Flew book, chart paper and whiteboard, pen or pencil

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Emotions. The child in the story recognizes how they feel when first meeting the horse, Dancer, and navigates a range of emotions as they work with their community to help Dancer.
- Caring. The child and their community show their caring ways as they figure out how to get Dancer to safety.
- Helping. The child and their community work together to help each other and Dancer.

Land acknowledgment: You may want to do a land acknowledgment before this reading and lesson to determine what land you are on. [Native-land.ca](https://native-land.ca) is an app to help map Indigenous territories, treaties, and languages.

BEFORE READING: Share the book cover with the children, and ask them to observe the cover artwork.

Ask (Optional: Write down the childrens' ideas on a board or sheet of paper):

- Who do you think Dancer is? What do you think "The Day Dancer Flew" might mean?
- What do you think it means when someone says it feels like they're flying?
- What do you know about floods or big storms? How do they make you feel? How do you think those events affect animals and people?

DURING READING: Read the book. Pause on different pages and discuss the story.

- After reading the page that starts with, "At first I was scared to ride him," ask, "How do you think the child is feeling in this picture? How can you tell? How do you think Dancer feels in this picture? How can you tell? What do you notice about Dancer's body language?"
- On the page that starts with, "When I go out to feed Dancer, he warns me..." ask, "How do you think Dancer feels in this picture? How can you tell? What types of dangers do you think exist for horses?"
- On the next page, "I fly away. But not on Dancer." Ask, "How do you think the child is feeling?" "How do you think you would feel if you had to leave an animal behind?"
- On the page with the picture of Dancer with wings, ask: "What idea(s) do you think the child has when they say, 'What if we gave Dancer wings?'"
- On the page that starts with "Ms. K finds a helicopter pilot." Ask: "What do you think is about to happen?"



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DURING READING CONTINUED:

- On the page where the child is feeling “excited and scared.” Ask: “Have you ever felt excited and scared? What was happening when you felt that way?”

AFTER READING: Reflect on these questions.

- Which part of the story stood out to you the most? Why?
- What did you learn about working with others from this story?
- How did the child in the story show care for Dancer? How did the people in the child’s community or town show care for Dancer? What are some ways people show care for animals?
- Do you think the title “The Day Dancer Flew” has more than one meaning? How?

Deeper questions for older kids:

- This book is based on real events about people rescuing an animal during a flood. What does this story make you think about when you hear about real emergencies?
- Why might it be important to hope or keep trying even when something feels hard or impossible?
- How do you think the helpers felt when they worked together to bring Dancer to safety? Can you think of a time when you worked with someone to solve a problem? What happened? How did you feel?
- How do you think communities can come together to help animals and people during emergencies? What skills (like creativity, asking for help, not giving up) did you see the characters use in this story?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

- “What Helps You Stay Safe?” After reading *The Day Dancer Flew*, say: “In the story, when the flood came, the grown-ups and helpers worked together to keep everyone safe. If there were ever an emergency near your home, what do you think is your most important job?”

Guide children toward:

- Staying with a trusted adult
- Listening carefully
- Moving to a safe place

Then ask: What helps you remember to stay calm and listen during something surprising or loud? Keep it simple. Validate responses. Reinforce: “Grown-ups and helpers take care of big tasks. Kids focus on staying safe.”



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EXTENSION ACTIVITIES CONTINUED:

- Helping Hands Circle. When something hard happened in the story, different people helped in different ways. No one did everything alone. Have children sit in a circle.

Step 1: Quick Think

- Ask: Who helped in the story? What did they do?
- Keep responses short and simple (mom, helpers, pilot, community members)

Step 2: The Helping Hands Game

- Explain “We’re going to think of small ways people can help when something feels big.”
- Go around the circle. Each child finishes one sentence: “One way I can help is...” or “One way a grown-up helper helps is...”

- Examples:
 - Stay calm
 - Hold someone’s hand
 - Share space
 - Listen
 - Bring water
 - Make a phone call
- Keep the discussion moving – any answer is acceptable.

Why this works:

- Reinforces that everyone has a role
- Builds community



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EXTENSION ACTIVITIES CONTINUED:

- Emotion chart and perspective-taking. Go back through the illustrations and identify the emotions each character felt in the book. Have them pause on different pages and name specific emotions and the situations (e.g., Dancer during the storm; the child and community waiting outside for Dancer; and the child and community once Dancer lands safely). Optional: Have children add themselves to the chart and think about how they would feel in each situation.

	Emotions	Situation
Dancer		
The Child in the story		
Other people in the story (have children choose)		
Optional: You		

AT THE END OF THE LESSON:

Ask children to reflect on these questions. Try this with the whole group, in a sharing circle, or ask children to fill out index cards.

- How did you feel about today's book and discussion?
- What did you learn that you didn't know before?

DON'T FORGET TO REPORT YOUR READING:

[RedRover.org/reportreadings](https://www.redrover.org/reportreadings)