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Tiny Pretty Things



Synopsis

Black Swan meets Pretty Little Liars in this soapy, drama-packed novel featuring diverse characters who will do anything to be the prima at their elite ballet school. Gigi, Bette, and June, three top students at an exclusive Manhattan ballet school, have seen their fair share of drama. Free-spirited new girl Gigi just wants to dance—but the very act might kill her. Privileged New Yorker Bette's desire to escape the shadow of her ballet-star sister brings out a dangerous edge in her. And perfectionist June needs to land a lead role this year or her controlling mother will put an end to her dancing dreams forever. When every dancer is both friend and foe, the girls will sacrifice, manipulate, and backstab to be the best of the best.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up • In the competitive and cutthroat world of pre-professional ballet, three young women are putting their hearts and souls on the line to be the prima ballerina at the American Ballet Conservatory (ABC) where they live, study, and dance. The book is narrated by Gigi, June, and Bette in alternating chapters, each of whom has something to hide that could ruin their chances at landing the perfect roles at ABC this school year. California girl Gigi is new to ABC and is hiding a serious heart defect that could end her dreams before they are even realized. June's mother has continually threatened her daughter with the prospect of forcing her back into regular school. But June will stop at nothing to move beyond being an understudy and to find out her father's identity.

Bette, previously the best dancer at the school, is now being outshone by Gigi. Will Bette go back to her bad girl behavior and force another student to leave under suspicious circumstances, like she did to a former star? All of the protagonists are playing with fire, and they certainly can't trust anyone. In this guilty pleasure read, teens will be glued to their seats until the heartbreakening, cliff-hanger conclusion, which promises more to come in this drama-filled world of ballet, boys, and bad girl antics. References to sex, drugs, and alcohol are peppered throughout. Diversity is organically spotlighted here; many different races and body types are represented. VERDICT A fun and fast read that will appeal to fans of "Pretty Little Liars" and "Gossip Girl." —Traci Glass, Eugene Public Library, OR --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

“A page-turner with a heart.” (Kirkus Reviews) “Appealing both to dancers and drama lovers, this engaging, pulpy read skillfully explores a variety of issues, from sexual orientation to ethnic identity to single-parent households, in a glamorous, high-stakes setting.” (Booklist) “Diversity is organically spotlighted [in this] fun and fast read.” (School Library Journal) “A beautiful example of diversity in characters and settings.” (Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA)) “Charaputra and Clayton skillfully craft three distinctive, complex characters. This enticing glimpse into the ballet world is rich with detail and drama as the authors highlight its glamour and darkness.” (Publishers Weekly) “It’s impossible not to get sucked in, and the cast of characters is so diverse and fully realized, you root even for the nastiest of them. (Francesca Zappia, author of *Made You Up*)

With multiple POVs, *Tiny Pretty Things* makes us see ballet in a whole different way. With girls having such high hopes for a lead position, non-stop training, and backstabbing at every corner, this is definitely an intense novel that's filled with drama. The only problem that I had with it is that it was a little too immature for me. You have Gigi, Bette, and June who are completely 3 different girls going to a prestige and exclusive ballet school with dreams of becoming the lead for some of the largest pieces that are put on stage. But with the weight ins, family issues, and trying to keep your head up high at the same time, it is not as easy as it seems. When girls get hurt, they have come back up and show that they are worth being on stage because of their dreams and their family's dreams. I was shocked at the pace in which this book was written. The characters made me wish that the society wouldn't be so hard on them but having them fight with their inner self and having all the confidence they could get was actually motivational. But the moments where those "teenage

love" came out weren't for me. And I am not sure if it was the way it was presented or just me but I did not find them interesting. Overall, the book itself was a great read and I will read more from this author.

Ballet is freaking intense, and *Tiny Pretty Things* puts us right in the midst of a very competitive ballet conservatory where the girls will do whatever it takes to be the star. Bette and June have been at the American Ballet Conservatory forever. Bette believes that she is the best, while June is struggling to get noticed. Then, new girl, Gigi suddenly gets the starring role in the Nutcracker, June is her understudy, and Bette is just furious. She takes matters into her own hands, but she might not be the only one out to get Gigi. *Tiny Pretty Things* was super good! Following the three girls' POVs put us deep into the world of ballet. It's just amazing to me how far dancers go to perfect their craft. Not all of it is safe though, and I liked that the authors pointed that out. For instance, June keeps her weight unhealthily low and has some tricks to make the scale think she weighs more (but still underweight). Meanwhile, Bette self-medicates to keep her focus, and Gigi basically tries to ignore her heart condition. I was completely fascinated, but also horrified by all of this, and it certainly kept me flipping pages to see what would happen to these girls when they push too far. I also really loved how *Tiny Pretty Things* highlighted diversity, but also shed light on the discrimination that dancers face. Gigi is black and very aware of that fact, because pretty much all of the dancers are white or at least white-skinned. June is half-Korean, but doesn't fit in with the other Korean girls or the white girls; she feels invisible. Then there are gay side characters (male and female), and we get some bits about how the gay male dancers are viewed unfavorably by their instructors. There's just a lot going on on this front and I enjoyed it. Of course, there's also an awesome suspense plot at the center of *Tiny Pretty Things*. And even though we get three POVs, it's never totally clear who is the culprit. Someone really hates Gigi. Bette is obviously one of them and she is behind a lot of what's happening, but then there's June who is always in Gigi's shadow, waiting for her chance to shine. By the end, the pranks have gone way too far. And that ending chapter? I must know what comes next! That certainly throws a wrench in these girls' plans! *Tiny Pretty Things* was really great. I loved getting to know these girls, even if two of them are quite awful at times. I loved to hate them! I just had to know how far they're willing to go to get the lead role! There's also the mystery of who June's father is, and I can't wait to see how that plays out!

First off, you don't read TINY, PRETTY THINGS if you want a serious, thoughtful read. This is not to say the book lacks depth. The characters are well-drawn and face a variety of internal struggles beyond their wish to be prima ballerina. What makes this book stand out is the fast paced, simply addictive nature of the story. You have to find out what happens next, each cruelty worse than the previous yet completely believable. The cutthroat nature of elite schools married with creative arts and psychological issues blend together seamlessly. Even though it is written by two authors, there's no obvious delineation of who wrote what or unevenness in the narrative voice. That takes talents. All in all, the stories woven by Gigi, Bette, and June as well as a stellar supporting cast create a book that is a compulsive read. Looking forward to the upcoming sequel!

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