TRAILBLAZER

Discussion Guide

TRAILBLAZER

THE STORY OF BALLERINA RAVEN WILKINSON

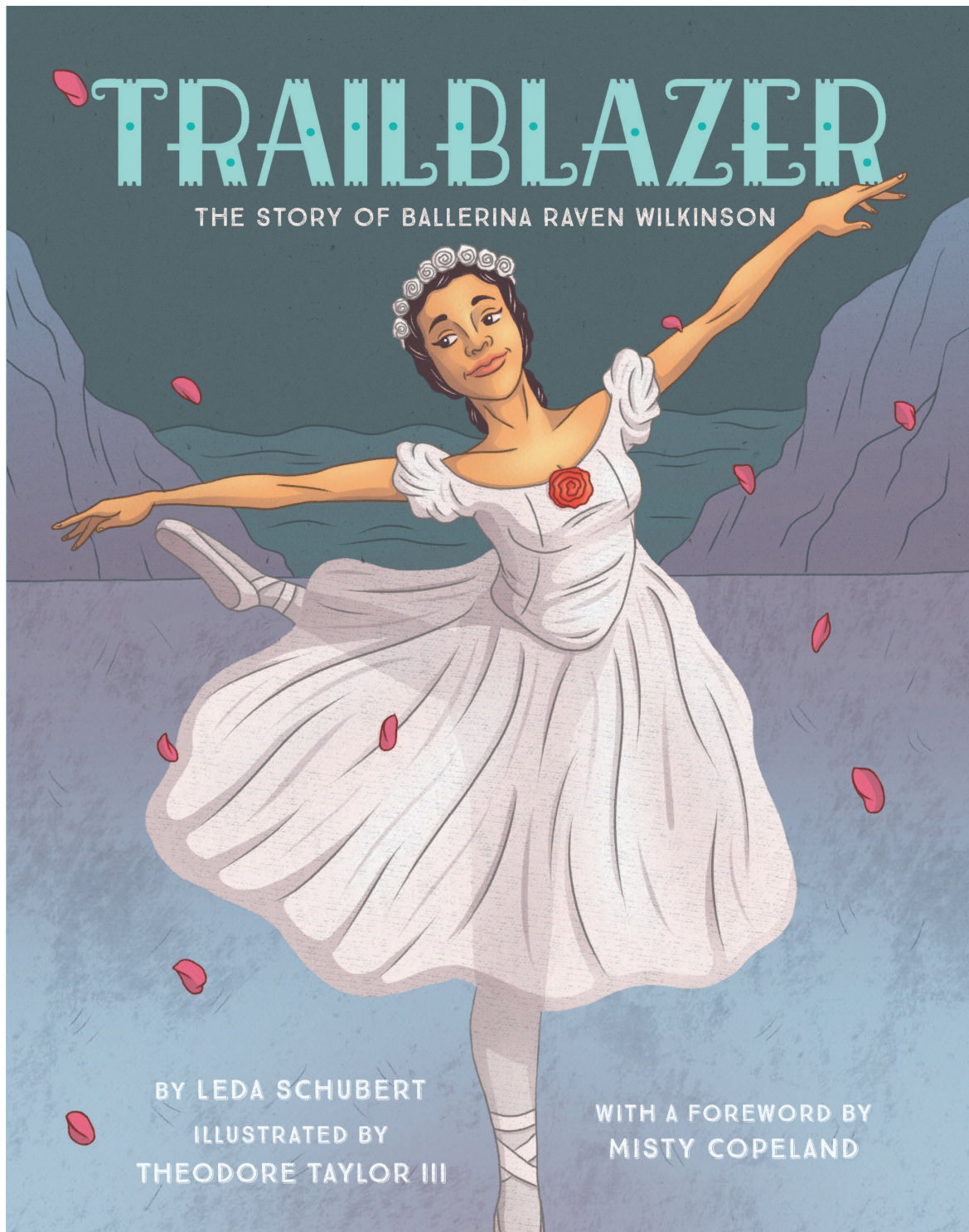BY LEDA SCHUBERT
ILLUSTRATED BY
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WITH A FOREWORD BY
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Introduction

During the 1950s, Raven Wilkinson's dream was to be a ballet dancer. She was talented, determined, and hopeful. However, society was not ready to accept her.

"Raven's inspiring story is one of perseverance, dignity, hope, and strength."—Misty Copeland

Guided Reading Level: O
Grade Level Equivalent: 3
Interest Level: Grades K-5

Before Reading

- What is a biography? How is a biography different than an autobiography?

- Why would an author choose an individual to write their life story? Give examples of biographies you have read.

- Describe how individuals have used problem-solving tools to manage conflict and change.

- How do values and beliefs/ideas change over time? Give examples.

- How can books and stories help us with everyday problems or situations?

- What is a "trailblazer"? (There are multiple meanings.) Who do you think is a trailblazer?

- Look at the front and back cover of *Trailblazer*. What do you think the story is going to be about?

- What is a "foreword"? Why do you think authors include a foreword in nonfiction books? Who wrote the foreword?

- What do you know about Misty Copeland?

- Read the foreword by Misty Copeland.

- What is a bibliography? Why do you think it is important to include a bibliography in a nonfiction book?

- How does the photograph of Raven and Misty make you feel?

**Read to find out about Raven Wilkinson's journey,
her impact on society, and her legacy.**

During Reading, Think About . . .

- The meaning of words and phrases; distinguishing literal from figurative language. Strategies to figure out unknown words (context, word parts, glossary).

- How specific illustrations contribute to the mood and setting, and how they emphasize aspects of the characters.

- The setting; time and place of the story.

- Characters in the story; their traits, motivations, thoughts, and feelings.

- How the characters' actions contribute to the sequence of events.

- The story's message/themes.

- Your point of view towards the themes and ideas presented.

- What people, forces, interests, and values oppose each other/conflict.

- Decisions the main character has to make.

- What adjectives would you use to describe Raven Wilkinson? Give examples from the book.

- Why is Raven Wilkinson famous? What contributions did she make to society?

- How did the author, Leda Schubert, make you feel connected to the main character with her writing?

After Reading

Discuss. Write. Connect.

- Create a word wall of new vocabulary words.

- Who is Raven Wilkinson? What kind of person is she? How did her decisions and actions reveal her personality?

- What experiences influenced her love of ballet?

- Explain the obstacles she faced in her life.

- Describe ways Raven had to hide who she really was. How did this make her feel?

- How did the time and place (setting) affect the life of Raven Wilkinson?

- What was happening in the United States during her life?

- Why was Raven able to dance in Europe?

- If she were born today, how would her life be different?

- How did she overcome obstacles?

- Who was there to encourage her?

- How did her decisions and actions change her life?

- When do you think a person should stand up for themselves or others?

- What did Raven do when she felt defeated by society?

After Reading Cont.
Discuss. Write. Connect.

- How do beliefs or values influence different people's behavior?

- Explain how the ballet troupe supported Raven. Why do you think they did? Would you have?

- How can conflict and conflict resolution lead to positive change?

- Why is Misty Copeland grateful to Raven Wilkinson?

- What impact did the letter from Raven Wilkinson have on you as a reader?

- How are people changed through their relationships with others?

- Create a timeline of Raven's life using the book.

- Research Raven Wilkinson and fill in new information that you find from your work. Share with the class.

- Research Misty Copeland. Compare and contrast Misty's and Raven's life stories.

- In small groups, complete an activity (collage, drawing, etc.) on how Raven Wilkinson broke the color barrier and became a "TRAILBLAZER."

Common Core Standards in this Guide

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.1
Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.2
Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.3
Describe the relationship between a series of historical events in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.4
Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.6
Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.7
Use information gained from illustrations and words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.9
Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1
Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3
Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

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Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.5
Refer to parts of stories when writing or speaking about a text. Describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.6
Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.7
Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.6
With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7
Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8
Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10
Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Common Core Standards in this Guide Cont.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1
Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.C
Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.D
Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.2
Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.3
Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.4
Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.6
Speak in complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.4
Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 3 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.4.A
Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.4.D
Use glossaries or beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.5
Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.5.A
Distinguish the literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases in context.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.5.B
Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe people who are friendly or helpful).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.6
Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases.