



# **Tour de Force: A Love Story**

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Gillian Kincade is a soloist with Ballet New York, a sought-after guest artist, and a committed Christian. Though she may be an anomaly in the world of dance, Gilly believes her devotion to God isn't compromised by following her dreams. Then she meets Jacob Ferrar. Jacob is the brilliant young artistic director of the Birmingham Ballet Theatre and a born-again Christian. When he offers Gillian the lead in his latest ballet she accepts, knowing it won't necessarily further her career, but it will touch her soul. On the chaotic road to opening night, Gilly and Jacob develop a deep professional respect for each other and begin to fall in love. Then their brilliant first performance is destroyed by a terrible accident, and suddenly both must face an uncertain future. Together, they dance the fine line between personal vision and God's will, listening for the guidance of the Father's heart.

## **Tour de Force: A Love Story Details**

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# From Reader Review Tour de Force: A Love Story for online ebook

## Lambhail says

I absolutely loved this book! I would definitely say it's a new favorite! The author did an amazing job writing this book! She did a fabulous job including just the right amount of love and drama. Not only that, but I love that the author makes it a christian book; including the characters struggles with their faith and temptation but staying strong in their faith and relationship with God. Overall this book was so great and encouraging. It was inspiring and I definitely recommend it!

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## Bailey says

Can Christian fiction become any more cliché? From the ultra conservative interests of Gilly and Jacob to their life situations, Tour de Force reeks of complacency.

Gillian is a twenty-one year old ballet dancer who always manages to stay positive and focused in addition to her brilliant career. She is (of course) a wonderful influence to her past roommate and (of course) is semi-dating an equally beautiful and successful Christian. Jared is a former ballet dancer who gave up the stardom to follow Christ, right into his role as head of a ballet company. He is a stand-in father for his nephew and loves every minute of it.

Both Jacob and Gillian claim to have no interest in dating or the opposite sex. And why should they? They're model Christians just like everyone else!

While Tour de Force might have been written to encourage Christians to take a stand for their beliefs and take a step back to see how God works, it was written in a very unconvincing manner that made me realize why I no longer find Christian fiction enjoyable.

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## Grace Tolman says

This was an interesting look at how Christians and followers of Christ handle the world of dance and the Arts. In one aspect, the Arts can be a beautiful way to use the talents that God gave us. But it can also be a place where values can be thrown out the door through various temptations.

Gilly is a prima ballerina that found herself in love with the art of Ballet dancing but was able to successfully maintain her Christian values. Jacob on the other hand made some bad decisions during his dancing career but was led to Christ by a staff in the dance company he worked for. They met when Jacob discovered her talent and wanted her to play in his Nutcracker production. They each had their flaws and both had to overcome their respective challenges. At the end, their testimonies of Christ are strengthened and they found love.

I gave this a 3 because although the plot was interesting, the heavy handed preaching moments did not do it for me. There were times when I felt that Gilly was so unreal. She was so steadfast in her faith that it seemed too good to be true. Where are her flaws? All the other characters weren't that super interesting as well. All in all, the premise of the story was good, the execution not so much.

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## **Annie Riley says**

I enjoyed so many things about this novel that I'm not entirely certain about where to begin my review. Characters, plot, settings, themes... Which one do I talk about first? Perhaps that list will help. So then, first is the characters.

Gilly was so fun to read. Her POV on things was refreshing, and I really appreciated her strength. She had such a kindred spirit mixed in with all that spunk. Her determination to glorify God in all she did was inspiring to me, and so was her love for others. As for Jacob, I thought the author did a good job of being in his head while still keeping his secrets. Definitely learned something there that I will apply to my own writing.

The plot was good. The romance was a bit predictable, but then, most of them are nowadays. I did like how the author moved things along and kept it interesting. Part of that was the varying settings. Alabama and New York are so vastly different, and I think that brought more depth to the story.

What blessed me most was how Gilly reached out to those around her and lifted them up to God in prayer. I cried through the scene when she leads a friend to Christ. And then also when God heals that injury. I felt so uplifted and encouraged!

I think the last thing I wanted to talk about was the backdrop of ballet. I love ballet--have since I was four years old and took years of classes. The world of professional ballet is something I dreamed of as a child but never pursued, though it has always drawn me. Reading about it from a Christian perspective was so very captivating that I didn't want the book to end. Or if it did, I wanted a sequel. Still do. I felt so at home reading of those familiar terms and exercises, remembering those exciting times of watching the older pointe dancers from backstage during recitals... The author wrote it well.

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## **Melanie says**

This book took me some time to get into and read. At times I found the story dragged and the wording was awkward. I gave the story four stars because I loved the authors passion for the gospel. I also love a good romance.

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## **Jill Williamson says**

Review by Gretchen Hoffman

I love ballet. Although I never got past intermediate ballet class as a kid, I love going to see dance performances, and if there's a book about dancers, you bet it'll pique my interest.

Gillian Kincade is an upcoming ballet star in the New York dance scene. Jacob Ferrar left the glitz of performing to become an artistic director, focusing on dance that glorifies God. When Jacob offers Gilly the lead in his play, she has to decide where she's supposed to be. But after an accident, the dancing future for both becomes uncertain, and they must learn to trust where God leads.

This book was just as fantastic as I expected it to be. (The cover alone made me want to read this! Especially since I love ballet.) The main characters were so fun, and the secondary characters were just as intriguing and well written as the main ones. I especially liked how real everyone was. Gillian and Jacob were not perfect by any means—they struggled with how to express their Christianity in everyday life and where the line is between tolerance of others' lifestyles and still sticking up for morality and truth. Sometimes it seems like the characters in books have it all figured out, but Gilly and Jacob didn't, and the book didn't end with them suddenly being able to perfectly balance their ideals with non-Christians around them. Life doesn't always have simple answers, and this book showed that. Plus, Ms. White did an excellent job of showing God's miracles. Although miracles seem rare nowadays, God is always faithful, and miracles today are just as real as they ever were. An excellent read. I will be getting more of Elizabeth White's books for sure.

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## **Zann says**

Unfortunately I'm giving up on this one. Normally I love a ballet setting, having danced and performing myself for roughly 30 years, however I'm only 32 pages in and there are already things that don't mesh for me.

#1 When the principal ballerina is injured during a performance her understudy takes her place. All good except for the fact that the understudy is from the corps de ballet rather than a soloist. I don't know how it is in other places but in my experience a corp dancer understudies a soloist and a soloist understudies a principal. (The hierarchy within a company being that the corp dancers are at the bottom rung, soloists in the middle and principals being the stars and highest earners.)

#2 Another dancer comments to the main character (who is 21) that she looks too young to be a professional. Well now, there are LOTS of professional ballet dancers who are 18 years old so that seemed like a goofy comment for the other dancer to make.

#3 A girl in the class befriends the main character. This girl mentions that she is dancing Dew Drop in the upcoming Nutcracker. Our main character was hired to dance Sugar Plum. Dew Drop, at least in our company, was a roll for a principal or possibly a really good soloist, yet this girl says she'd love to dance professionally but she has the wrong body type. Well, my response is that maybe her body type is wrong for NYCB or ABT but if she's good enough to dance Dew Drop then she's good enough for any number of regional ballet companies around this country. But this girl is also majoring in dance education at the local university so I guess she's giving up without much of a fight.

#4 The guy who is the artistic director of the ballet company saw our main character dance with her own company and that's what made him decide to hire her (during her company's off season) to perform with his company...but no, wait...it can't be her off season because he'd hiring her for Nutcracker and every company under the sun does a Nutcracker so it's unlikely her home company would give her up for their holiday season, especially since they just promoted her to soloist and could make good use of her in their own Nutcracker.

#5 When our main character meets the artistic director for the first time she's surprised that he knows who she is. Duh. He wouldn't have hired her without knowing who she was.

#6 The artistic director of the company is, in one scene, studying for an upcoming anatomy test. Wait, what? He's described as being around 30 years old and he's the director of a company but he's also going to college? Guess he isn't too committed to being an artistic director! Usually artistic directors are retired dancers with loads of stage and choreography experience. Maybe he's a young artistic director because an injury sidelined his dancing career but the story doesn't indicate that. Being an artistic director is a pretty hefty job so I'm wondering how he has time for college classes, raising his young nephew and choreographing dances and running a company.

Okay, enough. Sorry. I so wanted to love this book. I really wanted to see how the author blended Christian elements into this ballet setting but I'm afraid I'm going to be too distracted by these other little things to keep reading. Obviously, if a reader has no experience with ballet companies and performing then you wouldn't notice any of these things and you'll probably really like the book.

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### **Jane says**

What a book. It kept my interest from beginning to end. It was encouraging and uplifting as you realize couples face a lot in a relationship even in secular world jobs. Also it showed the struggles Gilly and Jacob faced in their positions being a Christian. I could so relate to Gilly's back injury as I was having back procedures myself at the time of reading this. Also Jacob's struggles overcoming his past before he became a Christian and making amends for problems he faced before knowing Christ. You do not have to understand ballet to enjoy this book. It is so uplifting and encouraging.

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### **Rhonda says**

This is the first of Elizabeth White's books I have read. I have found a new author to love!

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### **Cecilia says**

I really enjoyed this book!

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### **Christy says**

I have waiting for Elizabeth White's new book for months. First because I love her writing, and secondly because it involves ballet! I have long been a fan of the ballet, the dancing, the music, and how it all comes together, beautiful.

Tour De Force features a character we have met before if you have read Elizabeth's book Off the Record. Laurel's sister Gilly is the main character. She is a fun spitfire character with a heart for the Lord. We also get to meet Jacob, who is a handsome, Godly man who loves his family and the ballet. We also get to meet some great characters such as Victoria and Dimitri. The driving force behind this book is the characters. We get to know each of the characters, where they are in life and where they are in their relationship, or lack thereof, with the Lord. One of my favorite things about Elizabeth's books is her development of her

characters. You get to know Gilly and Jacob, their struggles, their triumphs, and their growth.

Tour De Force takes place in Alabama and New York. It was fun to see the differences in the culture between the two places, it is very distinctively different and Elizabeth does a fabulous job of showing the differences but keeping it realistic. It was also fun to get to know Gilly and Jacob's families and how they were important to them.

If you like character driven books full of romance, emotions, stumbles, and triumphs you will love Tour De Force!

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### **Casey says**

"Tour de Force" is a magnificent glimpse into a world of tutus and frills and pointe shoes. It's always a wide-eyed view of the human condition and how far someone will go to get what they want.

If ever someone, who has no coordination and can't be graceful if she tried, wanted to experiment in the world of ballet, this book would be the ticket. Detail, research and understanding of that world really brought it to life. I thought I might be in New York looking through the window of the high rise dance studio (though that sounds uncomfortable...)

I will say in that great research, I got a bit lost in all the characters were trying to do to save their careers and dance studios. I think a better personal understanding of how the dance world works would have been helpful on my end.

The love story is sweet, but I would have liked it to take a greater precedent. I felt it slipped into the background through the middle to two-thirds of the book.

I would have liked to get to know Gilly better. I found her a bit closed off to the reader and I wanted to really dig into what made her tick as a character. I could say the same for Jacob too.

But overall, it's a good book and one I'm glad I tried on for size.

This review is my honest opinion. Thanks to the publishers for my copy to review.

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### **Carrie Webber says**

As a former ballet dancer myself (okay I quit when I was seven) but this book made me wish I had continue. I loved how real all the characters felt. The love story was perfect and their battle with Christianity is something I really understood. It was a quick read but a good read.

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## **Kim says**

The ending was a little rushed.

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## **Ruth says**

I've been discovering that I have a bit of a weakness for ballet books like this, since every time I read one I can't help falling in love just a little. I also enjoy Christian fiction when it's well-written as I appreciate their "cleanliness" and the lovely insights some of the authors demonstrate. Therefore, I expected to love this book, and theoretically really should have... but unfortunately I kind of didn't.

Obviously I didn't hate the book, considering I gave it three stars, and admittedly the ballet thing probably did affect that a bit. I also was fascinated by White's exploration of the whole Christian arts issue, and generally liked how she handled that. You could also tell she'd done at least some research into ballet and [spoiler-related things] which is always a nice plus.

I think my main problem with the book was the main character Gilly. To some degree she was likeable, but I really couldn't get past how inconsistently judgmental she was at times, and even by the end I don't think she ever quite got it. To be fair, she did realize she'd been too harsh on Victoria, but I was still left a bit uncomfortable by how she seemed to be overstepping at times, and for the first half of the book, was feeling rather confused why Victoria was so willing to stay friends with Gilly considering how every single one of their encounters went. I appreciated how she treated Dmitri given that she disagreed with certain choices of his (never once brought up the subject with him and didn't even wince at him whenever it did come up), so I seriously don't get why she couldn't extend even the tiniest bit of that grace toward Victoria. I mean sheesh, I get that she's closer to Victoria, but when she's even reacting to Victoria being the one to pay for a date of all things...

Overall I did manage to like the book, partially like I said because of the whole ballet thing, though at the end of the day I'm glad to have gotten it free and can only hope the next book I read has a more likeable protagonist.

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