



# Basketball Ballet

by Lori Anastasia, *Highlights*

## WORDS TO KNOW

As you read, look inside, around, and beyond these words to figure out what they mean.

- **wrestling**
- **ballet**

- 1 “There’s a new kid in our class,” I told my friend Aidan as we hung up our coats at the back of the classroom.
- 2 “How do you know?” Aidan asked.
- 3 “He moved in next door to me,” I said, sitting down at my desk. “Mom and I brought muffins over yesterday.”
- 4 “Class, please welcome Brady Walker,” Ms. Simpson said, while my new neighbor stood beside her.
- 5 “Brady, tell the class something about yourself,” Ms. Simpson said.
- 6 “I’m from California,” said Brady. “I have a dog that eats all my stuff.”
- 7 Everyone giggled. His dog sounds just like mine, I thought.
- 8 “I like baseball and basketball, and I take dance class.”
- 9 “Dance class,” Aidan yelled. “That’s for girls!”
- 10 The whole class laughed, and Brady’s face turned bright red.
- 11 “That’s enough,” Ms. Simpson said.
- 12 At lunch, Brady walked over to an empty seat at my table.
- 13 “Hi, Emilio,” Brady said to me. “Thanks again for those awesome muffins. Can I sit here?”
- 14 I was about to say yes, but Jordan put his foot on the chair. “This seat is taken,” he said. “Sit with the girls.”
- 15 Aidan laughed.
- 16 Brady walked away and sat by himself.
- 17 That afternoon, Brady sat by himself on the bus. I felt bad for him, so I thought about sitting with him, but I didn’t want to get picked on.
- 18 I remembered how everyone teased me when I knit a scarf for Ms. Simpson. I didn’t like being teased, so I gave up knitting. But what would have happened if I’d stood up for myself?
- 19 When I got home, I made a peanut butter and pickle sandwich. My dog, Gus, was barking by the living-room window. I walked over to see why, and Brady was shooting baskets in his driveway. He was really good!



20 I went back into the kitchen to get my sandwich, but it was gone. Gus stood by the counter with a tiny pickle hanging from his mouth.

21 The next day, we had gym with Coach Kelley.

22 “Today we’re playing basketball,” Coach Kelley announced. “Emilio and Natalie will be captains. Emilio, you pick first.”

23 I looked around the room and noticed Brady, and it felt like giant robots were wrestling inside my stomach. I didn’t want to get laughed at, but I knew what I had to do.

24 “I choose Brady,” I said.

25 “What?” Aidan yelled. “He can’t play basketball.”

26 A giant smile spread across Brady’s face, and he ran up and stood beside me.

27 “Why did you pick me?” he asked.

28 “I wasn’t a good friend yesterday,” I said. “Plus, I know you’re good at basketball.”

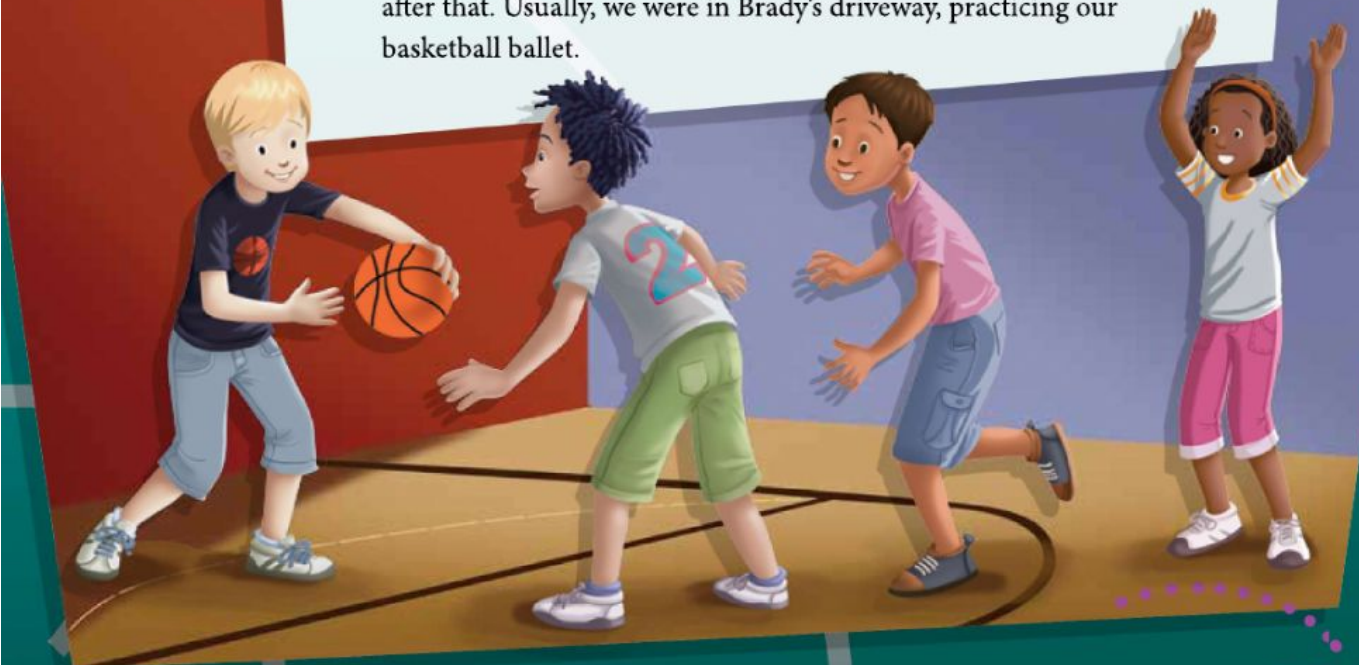
29 We started playing, and Brady made ten baskets and stole the ball from Aidan four times.

30 “Wow,” Aidan said to Brady, “where did you learn those moves?”

31 Brady smiled. “Ballet class.”

32 Aidan looked at me, then at Brady. “Could you teach me?”

33 Brady, Aidan, and I started hanging out together all the time after that. Usually, we were in Brady’s driveway, practicing our basketball ballet.





Use what you learned from reading the selection to respond to these questions.

**Think**

- 1** Describe each character's point of view toward Brady from paragraph 1 to paragraph 16 of the story. In the third column, write details from the story that support your choice.

Character	Point of View Toward Brady	Details
Emilio		
Aidan		
Jordan		

- 2** Why doesn't Emilio sit with Brady on the bus after school?
- A** He always sits with Aidan on the bus.
  - B** He feels bad for Brady and doesn't want to bother him.
  - C** Emilio doesn't want to get picked on.
  - D** He thinks Brady should sit with a girl.
- 3** Why is it hard for Emilio to choose Brady for his basketball team?
- A** He fears that Aidan and others will laugh at him for choosing Brady.
  - B** He has an upset stomach and doesn't want anyone else to know.
  - C** He is the only one who knows that Brady is good at basketball.
  - D** He worries that Brady might want to become friends with him.



- 4** This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then answer Part B.

**Part A**

What changes Emilio's point of view about how he should treat Brady?

- A** The class behaves badly when Brady is introduced.
- B** Emilio remembers once being teased himself.
- C** Aidan realizes Brady is good at basketball.
- D** The coach chooses Emilio to be team captain.

**Part B**

Which detail from the story **best** supports your answer to Part A?

- A** "The whole class laughed, and Brady's face turned bright red."
- B** "I didn't want to get laughed at, but I knew what I had to do."
- C** "I didn't like being teased, so I gave up knitting."
- D** "'I wasn't a good friend yesterday,' I said."

- 5** Use the dictionary entry to help you answer the question that follows.

**basket**

1. container made of sticks or twigs: *We put the apples in a basket.*
2. amount that a basket can hold: *That is a basket of food.*
3. basketball hoop: *The court had two baskets.*
4. score made in basketball: *Babs made a basket for the team.*

Which meaning matches how *baskets* is used in this sentence from "Basketball Ballet"?

**Brady made ten baskets and stole the ball from Aidan four times.**

- A** meaning 1
- B** meaning 2
- C** meaning 3
- D** meaning 4



- 6** This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then answer Part B.

**Part A**

How does Aidan's point of view of Brady change by the end of the story?

- A** He thinks Brady is strange to enjoy ballet.
- B** He admires Brady and becomes his friend.
- C** He worries that Brady will start dancing.
- D** He thinks that Brady won't teach him.

**Part B**

**Underline** details from the story that support your answer in Part A.

- "'Sit with the girls,' Aidan laughed."
- "'What?' Aidan yelled. 'He can't play basketball.'"
- "'Wow,' Aidan said to Brady, 'where did you learn those moves?'"
- "Aidan looked at me, then at Brady. 'Could you teach me?'"
- "'Dance class,' Aidan yelled. 'That's for girls!'"

- 7** Why does Emilio get to choose players for a basketball team?

- A** The team is playing with his ball.
- B** Coach Kelley named him team captain.
- C** He was the first student in the gym.
- D** He asked the coach to let him choose them.



**Write**

- 8 Short Response** What is your own point of view of Brady? Is it more like Emilio's or more like Aidan's? Use details from the story to support your answer.

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**Learning Target**

**You've seen that your own point of view and those of the characters in the story may not be the same. Explain why determining point of view will help you understand the stories you read.**

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