



A Standards-aligned Educator's Guide for

# IN LESS THAN A FLASH



written by Corinne Fenton  
illustrated by Soda Design

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## About the book:

Briana longs to dance with flowing, elf-like grace but her ballet lessons are not going well and she seems to be constantly at war with her own feet. Then one night she catches a glimpse of a strange, gliding light down at the lake. It looks like magic and indeed she soon discovers someone who can dance more beautifully than any human she has ever seen. He's an inspiration but there's a catch - he's apt to disappear in less than a flash.

## About the author:

**Corinne Fenton** is a writer with a passion for picture books that warm the heart. She often writes stories about animals. For those who know Corinne her affinity with animal characters is no random choice. Corinne has rescued so many strays over the years that she now never leaves the house without a pet lead.

Writing is her passion. She says, "While I love the writing and research, in the end it is the feedback from my readers that makes it all worthwhile."



## Pre-Reading Discussion Questions:

- Observe the cover. Describe all aspects depicted in the illustration.
- Consider the colour palette used by the illustrator. Explain how the use of colour establishes mood or theme in this story.
- Identify the image represented as a silhouette. Tilt the book in your hand. Notice the effect movement has on the image. Determine the image's disappearing and reappearing in glitter-like form might serve the story.
- Read the blurb printed on the back of the book. Name the protagonist, identify what she wants, and what is standing in her way of getting it.
- Consider the title - IN LESS THAN A FLASH. Based on your impression of the cover art the title, and blurb make a prediction. What do you think this story is going to be about?

## Post-Reading Discussion Questions:

***She watched mesmerised as the glittering light danced before her eyes (pg. 3).***

- The ‘premise’ is the purpose of a story. The premise describes what the story is basically all about. Discuss how the quote above represents the premise of IN LESS THAN A FLASH.
- Discover how the quote serves to connect Briana, Winthrop, and the premise of the story.

***“Oh yes, there are many other elves. But all the other elves are beautiful, graceful dancers. This is why I come here, to practise, so that I might become as graceful as all my friends” (pg. 10).***

- Compare and contrast Briana’s and Winthrop’s deepest desires. Explain the similarities and differences between the two characters.
- Identify ways that both characters help the other to achieve their goal.
- Discuss the value of practise.
- Explore the connection between practise and commitment.

***“Well, come with me then. Anything’s possible if you want it badly enough” (pg. 17).***

- The ‘theme’ of a story is defined as the tale’s true meaning. Consider how the quote above reveals the theme of IN LESS THAN A FLASH.
- What about you? What are your deepest desires? How committed are you in achieving your goals? How diligently do you practise to make your dreams become a reality?

***In less than a flash, he had gone (pg. 19).***

- Though Winthrop physically disappears in this scene, identify ways that his influence remains.
- Elves are supernatural creatures known to bring dreams to sleeping people. Do you think the story took place in Briana’s dreams or in reality? Or does it matter? Explain your answer.

***Review the Pre-Reading Discussion questions. Discuss your story line predictions based on the cover art, title, and blurb. Were you correct?***

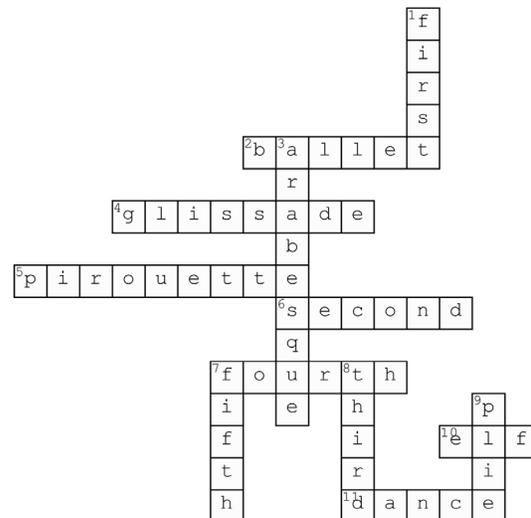
## Extension Activities:

~ Watch a ballet video. Observe the dancers’ fluid motions and artistic interpretation. Consider Briana’s and Winthrop’s deep desire to dance well. Write a short narrative from either character’s point of view expressing their desire to master difficult ballet steps. Tell why it is so important for them to do so.

~ Research elves and their roles in mythology and folklore. State ways that your findings support or conflict with the characterization of an elf as represented in the story.

~ Give each chapter a title. Illustrate scenes depicting the overall themes of each chapter. Chose a quotation that you feel best represents each of your drawings.

## Vocabulary Crossword Answers:



**A free audio book read by YA author David Hill is available at [www.giltedgepublishing.co.nz](http://www.giltedgepublishing.co.nz).**

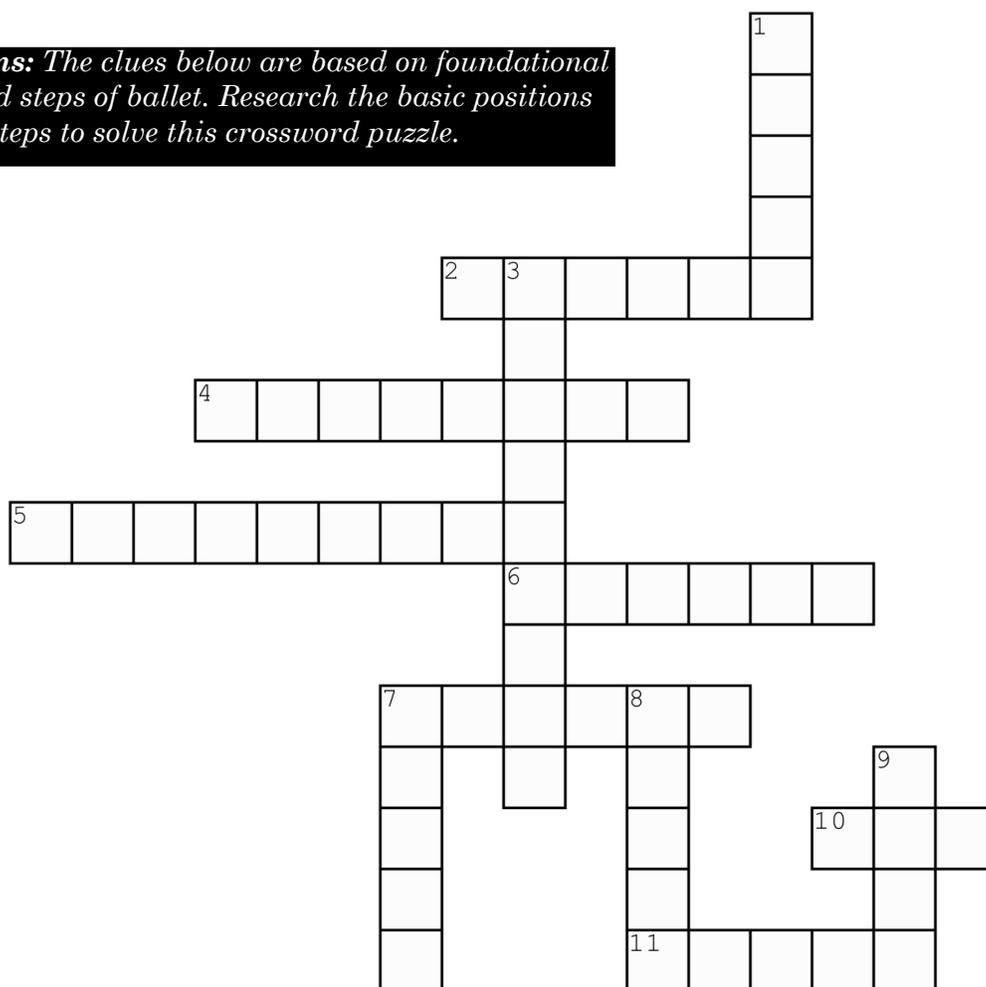
Guide created by Debbie Gonzales, MFA  
[www.debbiegonzales.com](http://www.debbiegonzales.com)



## Vocabulary Crossword Puzzle

“How I wish I could dance like that,” Briana said out loud. She went on watching him, following every movement he made, like she was etching them into her mind (pg. 4).

**Directions:** The clues below are based on foundational moves and steps of ballet. Research the basic positions of ballet steps to solve this crossword puzzle.



### Across

2. An artistic dance form
- 4 . A gliding step
5. Spinning on one foot with raised foot touching knee of supporting leg
6. \_\_\_\_\_ position - feet apart, arms wide
7. \_\_\_\_\_ position - one foot in front of the other, one arm raised above head, the other out to the side
10. Small supernatural creature
11. Move to music

### Down

1. \_\_\_\_\_ position - heels touching, toes turned out, arms in front in oval shape
3. Body supported on one leg, the other is extended horizontally backwards
7. \_\_\_\_\_ position - one foot exactly in front of the other, arms raised overhead in ballerina oval
8. \_\_\_\_\_ position - cross one foot in front of the other, one arm curved in front, the other is out to the side
9. A ballet move that involves bending both knees in a smooth motion