



The Scarecrow's Dance

Jane Yolen , Bagram Ibatoulline (Illustrator)

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Jane Yolen introduces us to the fickle scarecrow, who decides to leave his station and dance away the fall night. He leaps through the fields until he reaches the farmhouse, where he sees a small light in the window. Inside, a boy is saying his prayers, and he offers up a special prayer for the corn that will be harvested in the morning. Humbled, the scarecrow knows what he has to do: He returns to the field and watches over the corn as only he can. Masterfully told, with illustrations by award winner Bagram Ibatoulline, this book has all the makings of a new classic.

The Scarecrow's Dance Details

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Author : Jane Yolen , Bagram Ibatoulline (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review *The Scarecrow's Dance* for online ebook

Beverly says

The dark, muted illustrations were beautiful and matched the emotion of the poetry very well. I interpreted the scarecrow's actions this way: when he heard the young boy's prayer, he realized what an important role he had on the farm and embraced it, because at the end, he seemed happy with his choice.

Stephanie Kahn says

In *The Scarecrow's Dance* a scarecrow is magically released from his post in the corn field. He happily dances past familiar farm sights until he gets to the farm house. He finds a boy praying for everything important in his little life including the scarecrow. At this moment the scarecrow realizes that he must return to his place on the post. Jane Yolen creates a wonderful rhythm and rhyme that children will enjoy. Adults will appreciate the heart-warming theme that everyone has a purpose. The use of light when the scarecrow peers through the little boy's window is magnificent.

Manybooks says

I find this book a bit difficult to rate. The illustrations are magical, the narrative poignantly lyrical, and I do consider the general message of giving up one's pleasure (in this case dancing) for duty a good and acceptable if not actually important concept (that the scarecrow realises he has an obligation to protect the family's crops and not to simply dance the night away, leaving the fields unguarded). However, there is, at least for me, an essential element that it **MISSING** from the *The Scarecrow's Dance*, namely, that once the crops had been harvested, the scarecrow should have been depicted as again joyously (and with no guilt) engaging in his dance, that both duty and pleasure are interlinked. With the book simply ending with the scarecrow back at his post, having given up his idea of dancing, it seems or at least it might seem that the scarecrow should **NEVER** dance, which I personally consider rather sad (and potentially problematic), for once the crops had been harvested, the scarecrow should have had every right and opportunity in the world to dance, to frolic with gay abandon. Basically, the ending does not only feel rather abrupt and incomplete (and leaves me with real sadness for the scarecrow), in a worst case scenario, it could actually give children the understanding that fun, that dancing, is not only secondary to duty, but that it should be rejected out of hand, that dancing is somehow unacceptable.

Jeff says

Great children's book that teaches the child the significance of serving others. Good way to introduce the child to the concept of Christian service and vocation.

Amy says

This was a book with very beautiful illustrations, and a lovely poem. The kids were very enthusiastic about the whimsical and somewhat magical nature of this book. Toward the end, though, the poem became a bit abstract, no, philosophical and even spiritual. Toward the end it definitely felt like it was aimed a bit more at adults than kids.

Jane Yolen is a bit of a hit and miss author for me, but I really thought that her writing and Bagram Ibatoulline's illustrations blended beautifully for this work. It was full of movement and beauty, and it was a perfect read for blustery autumn weather.

Drew Graham says

A scarecrow in the middle of an autumnal field longs to break free and dance with the wind, but is that where he belongs?

I found this book when I was looking up Jane Yolen (author of some of our favorite books, the How Do Dinosaurs series) at our library, and this seemed like a great seasonal read. What I didn't expect was to find a pretty deep little fable about our place in life, what's really important, and the value of knowing who you are and what impact your actions have on other people. The illustrations were appropriately dark (a shade or two lighter might have been nice to keep interest of young readers and make things a little more readable for bedtime reading), and have a lot of movement and atmosphere, and the ending has a very surprising and very nice transcendental theme. I just don't know the last children's book I read that dared to go that direction these days.

I didn't know what to expect at all about this book by one of our most-read children's book authors, but I found this seasonal and atmospheric fable about a scarecrow who longs to be free to be pretty deep and even moving. I love when authors aren't afraid to express themes of faith, and I'm even more impressed when they can do it without being heavy-handed or preachy about it. This might not have been The Boy's (2.5) most-requested library book, but he did enjoy it and he liked pointing out scarecrows whenever he happened to see them. This would be a good one to read with slightly older kids and discuss the ideas and events in it.

Gwen the Librarian says

I'm not always a fan of poem picturebooks, but Jane Yolen's newest is completely engaging and is paired with gorgeous illustrations that perfectly match the mood of the piece. The whole thing is perfect for autumn; somber and joyful, you can almost taste the crisp air as you're reading.

Kristen says

I have seen this book at the library the last couple of trips, and I keep wanting to pick it up...but then I remember that this is one that I actually snagged at the annual booksale. I finally sat down to read it with my daughter last night and I really enjoyed it.

The rhyming isn't quite as good as Reindeer Christmas (click the link to see my review on this!) but it is still much better than most other books that rhyme. For the most part it flows and doesn't use too little or too large of words.

I loved the illustrations. That was what caught my eye initially for this book. The pictures were unique and eye catching on each page and had a softness to them. They're beautiful.

What I was pleasantly surprised at while reading the ending, was that this actually has a Christian message. The scarecrow watched a child pray and then the book questions whether scarecrows pray. It was actually a really nice book, but those who are religious might be surprised to see praying in it.

I actually look forward to finding more children's books by this author to see if they hold up to this one or if this one was a fluke.

EDIT: I just discovered that this is the same author who writes the "How Do Dinosaurs..." series that I love too! Highly recommend books by this author!

Mili Fay says

Beautiful. A story about a scarecrow inspired by the wind to dance. But anyone can dance, only a scarecrow can protect a field. ;-)

The story is simple and written in rhyme. The rhythm of the words is soothing. I think this will make a perfect bedtime story.

The illustrations are beautiful. They carry the sentiment of the story. Each one is a painting to be enjoyed at leisure. However, each one is also full of movement and grace. The staging is phenomenal. I think this illustrator may have been an animator, or at the very least a film buff.

Calista says

I love it when I happen upon a fantastic book. A cover catches your eye, you give it a try and it turns out so lovely. I love that. The hope is that each book will do this for us, but occasionally that something happens and ZAM - magic in your hands.

A scarecrow stands watch in his field when a wind whips up. He moves like the wind is blowing him around and it looks like this natural dance until he leaps off of his pole and begins to dance. His dancing is carefree and filled with joy. I love dancing. I love to watch it and to do it. Stuff happens and you need to read this wonderful book. The scarecrow also takes joy in being useful to the family that owns the house.

This is not a scary book, but I still didn't read it too my niece. We have to be careful with what she sees right now. She missed out on this one. Now, my nephew loved this. When the scarecrow leaped in the air he actually clapped his hands. He wanted to make a scarecrow to see it dance. He gave this 5 stars and I agree.

The book is told in rhyme and verse. The artwork is magical and looks like the wind is dancing the

scarecrow. This is a marvelous book. I'm glad I took a chance on it.

Matthew says

A nice piece of poetry here. Of course, it came out at the same time as a couple of other similar books and I think it didn't get a lot of attention because of that. The illustrations are so amazing though. The poetry is simple, yet compelling and narrative. Very nice book.

Jenny says

[The message I took from it really struck a chord. The message I got was that finding a purpose for your life brings meaning and direction. That finding that purpose allows you to maybe give up things in order to do something better. For example, giving up sleep to rock your baby. Giving up a hobby ...at least temporarily...to pursue a career that you love. Life is about making choices and

Kelsey says

Scarecrow dances across the field to the window of the farm house. He watches the young boy pray that the Lord will watch over the scarecrow to keep the fields safe. He returns to his post with the knowledge of his important role.

This book would be appropriate to share as a read aloud with children between two and five years old. The rhyming verse will help young children develop phonemic awareness. The book could also be used to help develop vocabulary about farms and crops. Children will also enjoy the colorful and realistic illustrations.

Melanie says

A scarecrow hops down off his pole to take a stroll though the cornfields. He finds himself at the farmhouse where he observes a boy praying. The young boy prays for each of the animals and then prays for the scarecrow to keep the fields clear of crows. The scarecrow finally understands why he is so important that he dances back to his post and leaps up onto his stand.

Another fabulous book from Jane Yolen!

Tressa says

The poetry in this book is beautiful, but the images of the scarecrow scared the hell out of me. I hate scarecrows like others hate clowns, so if you also have a fear of the stuffed man then steer clear of this book!

"He shrugged his shoulders,

And a grin
Just like a corn row,
And as thin,

broke out along
His painted face.
He gave a leap--
And left his place."

Run for your life, kids! Scarecrow's off his stick!

"He pirouetted
On the lane,
And then into
The yard he came.

Ahead he saw
A yellow light,
The family tucking
Into night.

He pressed his nose
Against the glass,
His straw feet into
Crinkled grass,

And watched a child
On bended knees
Begin a prayer
By saying, "Please..."

(Scarecrow is peering in at a little boy saying his prayers. *gulp*)

"The scarecrow heard
With painted ears,
And wept a pail
Of painted tears."

As my little boy says, "I'm outta here."
