



 **STARRED REVIEW**

**The Tale of the Cat and the Ballet Mouse**

Anne Krohley

Archway Publishing, 26 pages, (hardcover) \$22.95, 978-1665729413

(Reviewed: June 2023)

A cat brought in to de-mouse the Metropolitan Opera House is entranced by his prey's dancing in Anne Krohley's charming picture book *The Tale of the Cat and the Ballet Mouse*.

Mimette is a young mouse, raised in the NYC Metropolitan Opera House. Each night, she spies on the performances that happen there, and when she's seen, the management puts a plan into action to remove her. Dodging mousetraps, Mimette decides to learn to dance like the performers she's watched, sneaking into their practices and imitating their movements. Meanwhile, the management calls in the famous mouse-catching cat Hobart, assigning him the mission to rid the place of Mimette.

But Hobart appreciates Mimette's dancing, and he catches her only to release her again. They concoct a plan to fool management into thinking Hobart has eliminated her from the Opera House, which allows Mimette to continue dancing—and Hobart to continue watching her dance.

Krohley is a ballet dancer, teacher, and choreographer, and her book fosters a genuine appreciation for ballet through Mimette's and Hobart's enthusiasm for dance and employing language that conveys its elegance. Explaining his feelings to Mimette, Hobart says, "Your arabesques are the most exquisite I have ever seen [...] and your turns and jumps [...] it is like you are floating on the stage." The narrative's only flaw are numerous missing commas, as in: "In the shimmering light he saw a mouse, but it was not just a mouse it was Mimette."

The art captures the story beautifully, from dancers in motion on stage to close views of faces and expressions, giving the story a compelling, dynamic quality. And Mimette, in her tiny tutu, is particularly appealing.

With its focus on ballet, the book should appeal to young dancers, but other youngsters will also delight in this endearing story. It's real accomplishment is the way the book emphasizes Mimette's sense of curiosity and wonder, characteristics any child would do well to imitate.

**BlueInk Heads Up:** The Star designation is given with the acknowledgement that copyediting issues remain in need of attention.