

# Don't Think, Dear

*On Loving*



*Leaving Ballet*

Alice Robb



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## *Recommendations for Further Reading and Viewing*

In the course of research and writing, I read dozens of memoirs, biographies, and novels set in the ballet world, and watched almost as many ballet-themed films and TV shows.

Here are a few of my favorites (all of which informed my thinking, not all of which made it into this book by name):

### *To Read*

Joan Acocella, *Twenty-Eight Artists and Two Saints*—includes *The New Yorker* critic's essays on dancers and choreographers such as Mikhail Baryshnikov, Vaslav Nijinsky, Frederick Ashton, and Jerome Robbins

Toni Bentley, *Winter Season: A Dancer's Journal*—an impassioned firsthand account of a young dancer's life at Balanchine's New York City Ballet, and the inspiration for many of the ballet memoirs that followed

Misty Copeland, *Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina*—the extraordinary rags-to-riches story of the first Black principal dancer at American Ballet Theatre

Meredith Daneman, *Margot Fonteyn: A Life*—Daneman, a novelist, spent a decade researching this epic account of the ballerina's intimate and professional life

Suzanne Farrell (with Toni Bentley), *Holding On to the Air*—an extraordinary artist's memoir of her creative process, and her side of her controversial relationship with Balanchine

Sophie Flack, *Bunheads*—a former New York City Ballet dancer's coming-of-age novel about a young woman torn between the discipline of dancing and the allure of normal life

Jennifer Homans, *Apollo's Angels: A History of Ballet*—the definitive story of ballet in Europe and America, by a scholar and former professional dancer

Camille Laurens, *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen: The True Story Behind Degas's Masterpiece*—a novelist's meditation on the tragic life of Degas's young muse

Georgina Pazcoguin, *Swan Dive: The Making of a Rogue Ballerina*—a juicy memoir by the first Asian American female soloist at New York City Ballet

Adrienne Sharp, *White Swan, Black Swan*—wistful short stories—some based on historical figures—capture the beauty and sacrifice of life in ballet

Noel Streatfeild, *Ballet Shoes*—the classic 1936 British children's novel—following three orphan sisters dreaming of stardom—was my favorite book when I was ten, and was just as enjoyable when I reread it last year

James Wolcott, *Lucking Out*—a memoir about (among other things) falling in love with ballet in 1970s New York

*Fjord Review*—like *Pointe* magazine for *n+1* readers—founded a few years ago by an Australian critic

### *To Watch*

George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker* (1993)—New York City Ballet's *Nutcracker* has been filmed more recently, in 2015, but my favorite version features Wendy Whelan as Coffee and thirteen-year-old Macaulay Culkin as the Nutcracker Prince

*Center Stage* (2000)—a teen drama about ballet-school rivalries—elevated by performances from American Ballet Theatre stars including Ethan Stiefel and Julie Kent

*Dance Academy* (2010–2013)—an extremely charming Australian TV show about a group of teens at a fictional ballet boarding school

*Breaking Pointe* (2012–2013)—a reality TV show set at Salt Lake City’s Ballet West—both a soap opera and a showcase for serious dancing

*Horizontes* (2015)—a rare peek at the Grand Theater of Havana, this documentary features a young student at the Cuban National Ballet School, a star ballerina at the company, and—overseeing it all—ninety-five-year-old Alicia Alonso

*Dancer* (2016)—a documentary about the troubled Ukrainian ballet prodigy Sergei Polunin, who quit the Royal Ballet School at age twenty-two and then went viral with a dance video to Hozier’s pop song “Take Me to Church”

*In Balanchine’s Classroom* (2021)—a documentary featuring emotional interviews with some of Balanchine’s most devoted dancers, as well as archival footage of Balanchine at work

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