

CATCH a spark!

Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



Firebird

Written by Misty Copeland / Illustrated by Christopher Myers
96 pages / Grades K- 5

Acclaimed ballerina Misty Copeland speaks to a young dancer lacking in confidence and shows her the importance of confidence, hard work and determination. Told through vivid and unique illustrations combined with lyrical prose, Misty's signature role of the Firebird becomes a symbol of hope and perseverance.

C

Context

In 2015, **Misty Copeland** became the **first African American woman to become a principal ballerina** for the American Ballet Theatre, where her first leading role was in *Firebird*. Misty's path to success was not an easy one personally or professionally as she regularly faced issues of **diversity**. She has been featured in many documentaries, news segments and magazines, becoming an advocate and mentor for children and an author of three books.

A

Arts

Award winning illustrator Christopher Myers creates **bold, vivid, purposeful illustrations**.

Discuss **artistic choices**. How does layering and **collage** amplify the words on each page? What **techniques** do you notice?

Myers is also a clothing designer. Does this skill affect the illustrations? Do you notice a sense of **texture**?

Ballet is front and center. What do students know about ballet? Discuss the years of dedication and focus required.

T

Themes

Beauty of dance, beauty of you.

Beauty of art is found within yourself.

Feeling empowered to be whatever you wish to be.

There are no limits, but only endless possibilities.

Movement can shed fear.

Self-confidence will lead you wherever you wish to go

Importance of hard working dedication.

C

Create

Write about who is Misty is speaking to. Why do you think so? How can you support your thinking?

Choose a page of text and create your own illustration for it.

Choose a page of text. Let those lines be a story starter for your own creative writing piece.

Play the music "Firebird". Does the music align with the message of the story? Does it align with the illustrations?

Can you design a movement for each page?

H

Heart Words

"the space between you and me is longer than forever"

"your beginning's just begun"

"we will wrap our hearts careful as ribbons on pointe shoes."

Author's Note: "I hope to pave a more definitive path than then that was there for me but was just a little too hidden."

