Ballet is about imagination and creativity. Have you ever wondered what it would be like to choreograph a dance, design a set, or write a ballet story? Well, now it’s time to get creative. Enjoy Kailey Whitman’s Illustrated Swan Lake and finish the story with your own drawings and text. The ending is up to you!

Swan Lake is a Story Ballet that was first performed in 1877 in Moscow, Russia with music by Peter Tchaikovsky and choreography by Julius Reisinger.

Story ballets, as you might guess, tell a story. They contain action, characters, a beginning and an end. The Nutcracker and The Sleeping Beauty are other famous story ballets from the 19th century; classic stories and novels such as The Great Gatsby and The Three Musketeers also have been transformed into ballets.

Telling stories in ballet can happen through dancing, but also through costumes, set design, lighting, and the story ending. Swan Lake has changed over the years through new choreography, and in addition, new endings to the traditional story. How will you tell the story?

Text by Brie Stoltzfus
Prince Siegfried and his friends are out on a hunt. Siegfried is feeling thoughtful and decides that he wanted to be left alone to think.
Siegfried enters a moonlit clearing by a lake and sees a magnificent swan. He carefully aims his crossbow to capture the swan as his hunting prize, but, to his amazement, the bird transforms into a beautiful woman.
“What just happened?” Siegfried asked.
Odette, the Swan Princess, explained that she is under spell of an evil sorcerer, cursing her to be a swan each day at sundown.
At that moment the evil sorcerer, Von Rothbart, appears. The Prince, astonished, reaches for his crossbow, but Odette protects Van Rothbart: "Don't shoot! If he dies, the spell will never be broken. The only way to break the spell is for someone to declare their feelings of true love for me." Siegfried is amazed and enamored by the beauty and mystery of Odette's story. "I've said too much--I must go," Odette said, and slipped away into the forest with Van Rothbart.
The next evening, a ball held in honor of Prince Siegfried begins; heralds and trumpets announce the start of the party as he enters the ballroom. Huge crowds of young princesses from all over the world arrive to be introduced to Siegfried hoping to charm him so that he will choose them to be his wife.
Despite the crowds of distinguished guests, Siegfried still has the beautiful Odette on his mind. Trumpets interrupt his thoughts to announce a surprise guest—

Von Rothbart accompanied by someone who looked like Odette! In fact, it was a look alike named Odile brought by Van Rothbart to trick Siegfried.
The trick works. After a magical dance, Siegfried whispers, "I'm in love with you. Would you spend your life with me?" As he said this, a mischievous glint in Odile's eyes reveals Siegfried has been tricked: "Wait, you're not Odette, are you?" he cries to his dancing companion.
Von Rothbart and Odile laugh at Siegfried’s mistake. Odette, seeing all of this unfold, weeps at the castle door and then runs away into the forest.
Grief-stricken, Siegfried rushes to the lakeside. At the lake, Odette in swan form is surrounded by her fellow swans. Siegfried cried, “Odette, please forgive me! What can we do to fix this?”
Reader, what happens next? Is Odette destined to remain a swan forever? Is there something Odette and Siegfried can do to fix his mistake? You write the ending to this story!