

# Girl Can't Dance

What will Emma give up to become a star?

## About the Story

Lexile: 640L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

### Learning Objective:

to compare ideas about fame expressed in a short story and in a poem

**Key Skills:** synthesis, foreshadowing, figurative language, plot, allusion, inference

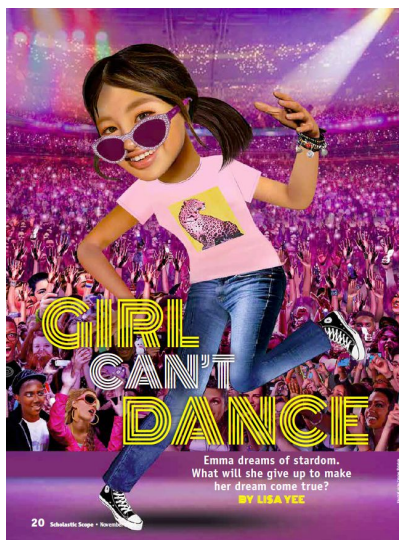
### Essential Questions:

- Do fame and fortune lead to happiness?
- What is the value of friendship?
- How does social media affect our lives?

### Standards:

The article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.9, W.2, W.9, SL.1, L.4, L.5, L.6

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



## Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of support materials at [scope.scholastic.com](http://scope.scholastic.com).

### Audio:

- Read-aloud
- Text-to-speech
- Podcast: Who Wants to Be Famous?

### Recommended pairings from the Scope archives:

- "The Mission"
- "Can Fame and Fortune Make You Happy?"
- "The Rise of Fandoms"
- "YouTube Made Me Do It"

### Skill Building Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Preparing to Write: Fame's Sting
- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- **Core Skill Workout:** Inference
- **Literary Elements:** Character Thinking Tool
- Choice Board
- Quiz\*
- Contest Entry Form

\*Available on two levels

# Step-by-Step Lesson

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

## 1. Preparing to Read 15 minutes

### Listen to a podcast. (10 minutes)

- Prior to class, have students listen to the podcast **Who Wants to Be Famous?** You can share the link directly with students from the story's Resources tab at Scope Online, or students may access it from the story page in Student View.

### Do-Now: Theme Anticipation Guide (5 minutes)

- Project the **Theme Anticipation Guide**. As students enter the classroom, have them write down whether they agree or disagree with each statement. Then ask volunteers to briefly explain their responses. Alternatively, share the **interactive version of the activity**, allowing students to respond digitally and view their classmates' responses to each statement in real time.

## 2. Reading and Discussing 45 minutes

- Have a student read the As You Read box on page 21 or at the top of the digital story page.
- Read the story once through as a class. Optionally, have students listen to the read-aloud while they follow along. (The **audio read-aloud** is located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.)
- Divide students into groups to read the story again, pausing to discuss the close-reading questions that appear in the margins of the magazine or by clicking on the bolded text. Have students record their answers in the margins or on the **Close-Reading Questions activity**. *Tip: If you're remote, you can have each group respond in a shared doc or discuss the questions in their own chat rooms.*

### Close-Reading Questions

(10 minutes)

*The close-reading questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.*

1. **Explain why this is an example of foreshadowing.** (foreshadowing) *Foreshadowing is when a writer gives a clue or hint of what is to come later in a story. This line indeed foreshadows future events: Emma becomes famous after a YouTube video of her goes viral, the fame goes to her head, and she loses Aubree as a friend.*
2. **What kind of figurative language is the author using? What does it tell you about Emma's dancing?** (figurative language) *The author is using a simile to compare Emma's dance moves to a cat hacking a hairball out of its digestive tract. This comparison tells you that Emma's dance moves are what most people would consider awkward and offbeat—just bad.*
3. **What does Emma realize?** (plot) *Emma realizes that Theo secretly used his phone to record her dancing and then uploaded the video to YouTube.*
4. **What did Warhol mean? How does this relate to Emma?** (interpreting text) *Warhol meant that fame is short-lived. This relates to Emma because her celebrity is fleeting—her video, which at one point was skyrocketing toward 20 million views, is no longer being watched and has been replaced by a new top-trending video.*
5. **This line alludes to a famous fairy tale. Can you name it? How does it connect to Emma?** (allusion) *This is an allusion to Cinderella, a story about a girl whose fairy godmother transforms a pumpkin into a magical carriage. The carriage takes Cinderella to a royal ball where she meets a prince, and it seems she will soon begin a remarkable new life. The only catch is that the carriage turns back into a pumpkin at midnight. This story connects to Emma because just as Cinderella's carriage turns back into a pumpkin, Emma goes from being an overnight celebrity back to an ordinary girl again.*
6. **Why do they both cringe?** (inference) *Perhaps they both cringe because "Girl Can't Dance" isn't entertaining anymore; at this point, it's even a little embarrassing. By referring to it, Emma sounds desperate for approval and attention.*
7. **What is Emma going to tell Aubree? What do you think will happen?** (inference) *Answers will vary, but students will likely say that Emma is going to tell Aubree she is sorry for her hurtful behavior and that fame isn't all it's cracked up to be—definitely not worth losing a true friend for.*

- As a class, discuss the following questions.

### Critical-Thinking Questions

(5 minutes)

*The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.*

1. **List as many memorable viral videos as you can think of. Do you notice any patterns in their content? In people's responses to them? In how long they're popular?** *Answers will vary. Students will likely say that many viral videos feature amazing feats, epic fails, or animals, or are completely silly and random, and that people's responses to them usually range from critical to amused to admiring. Additionally, people do more than just enjoy viral videos, they participate and create countless parodies of them. Most important, a viral video's moment in the spotlight always ends—and there's always another video in line right behind it.*
2. **Do you think it's easy or difficult to become famous online? Why? What are the pros and cons of online fame?** *Answers will vary. Some students may say that it is difficult to become famous online because of the large number of users and amount of content that exists. Others may suggest that it's easy to become famous online, especially if a celebrity or influencer interacts with one of your posts. This sort of attention can be appealing because it can make you feel popular and accepted—or perhaps lead you to believe that you can achieve fame and fortune like your favorite stars. A downside is that people can become famous (or technically, infamous) for something unpleasant, and they may receive criticism and harsh comments. Another downside is that once something is online, it's extremely difficult to get rid of it.*
3. **Some people think young people are obsessed with fame. Do you agree? Why or why not?** *Answers will vary.*
4. **What are the benefits of being able to share one's passions and talents on social media?** *Answers will vary. Students may offer that being able to share our lives online gives us an opportunity to express ourselves and be creative in front of a large audience—and also to find acceptance, community, knowledge, and inspiration we might not be able to find elsewhere.*

## 3. Skill Building and Writing

20 minutes

- As a class, read the Emily Dickinson poem "Fame Is a Bee" that appears at the end of the story. Then have students complete **Preparing to Write: Fame's Sting**, a poetry analysis and synthesis activity. This activity will help students organize their ideas in preparation for the writing prompt on page 24 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page.

- Alternatively, have students choose a culminating task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of differentiated activities.

**Recommended pairings from the *Scope* archives that explore the nature of fame:**

Fiction: "The Mission" (September 2018)

Debate: "Can Fame and Fortune Make You Happy?" (November 2016)

Paired Texts: "The Rise of Fandoms" and "Is Fandom Good for You?" (February 2020)

Debate: "YouTube Made Me Do It" (April 2018)