

## Synopsis of Dads Don't Dance by Michelle Worthington

Poppy loves to dance. She has been attending the local dance school for one year. Last year, she was in the chorus of *The Little Mermaid* and had a great time, but her Dad wants her to try out for a lead role in the end of year concert. It would mean she gets to spend more time with her best friend, Jeff, but will she have a chance against the two most popular girls in town, Peace and Hona, daughters of the Mayor. She is so clumsy, she doesn't think she has a chance.

The dance teacher announces that she will be expanding the school into a centre for performing arts and will have singing and acting classes as well as dance lessons. This year, the musical will be *Cats* and will have dancing and singing and those wanting lead roles will have to audition for both. Poppy wants to be a star, but she doesn't look like most of the other girls trying out. This is a chance for her to learn how to be like her idol, Katie 180, who performed *Cats* when she was in High School.

The first dance audition doesn't go perfectly, even though she wasn't asked to sit down, and Poppy doesn't think she will be offered a chance to audition for a lead role, even though she realises she would love to be more than a girl in the chorus. After the audition, Poppy finds the courage over ice cream to tell her father she is worried she is going to let him down. Her father encourages her to follow her dreams, but also shares the dreams he has for Poppy and the rest of the family. The Starz family is a team.

Life goes on as usual as they wait to find out if Poppy gets called back for an audition for a lead role. A day at the football gives Poppy some perspective about how much her family loves each other and what her father does for her. When they get an email while doing a sausage sizzle to raise money for the footy club, the whole crowd hears about it and now she has no choice but to do her best, so she doesn't let her family down, or the Wombats, or Wanderoo. Everyone in town is doing what they love and love what they do. They are good at it. Poppy feels the pressure.

Poppy and Jeff are paired against the twins, Peace and Hona, who have already memorised the song and their mother saw the stage show in London and has prepped them to win. She meets the singing teacher and does a great audition with Jeff. They get the duet. Poppy finds a confidence she never knew she had, as long as Jeff is by her side.

She finds out she needs glasses, on the same day she is bullied at school by the twins and finds out that Jeff has his footy finals the same day as the concert. She doesn't understand why the twins are so against her having a lead role instead of them. Hona threatens to tell her mother, the mayor, to take the duet from Poppy. Getting glasses seems like another way of showing she isn't the showbiz type and Poppy starts to doubt if she can get up on stage if the twins hate her for doing it or even if she will get the chance.

Poppy's father comes up with a plan but won't tell Poppy what it is. She picks up her glasses and wears them to school for the first time where Hona teases her but her sister, Peace tries to become friends with Poppy. Poppy's father helps the other mums learn how to do the makeup for the musical. The final dress rehearsal doesn't go as well as Poppy hoped, and Jeff tells her she was picked because she wasn't perfect. She talks to Jeff about her fears and realises that she doesn't have to be perfect to be great at what she does. Her imperfections make her stand out from the crowd and she uses them to her advantage.

The megastar Katie 180 does a personal appearance in the local city shopping centre and Poppy and her mother go to see her. Her mother sneaks them both back stage to get an autograph and a selfie. Behind the scenes turns out to be much less glamorous than Poppy expected, and Katie 180 isn't as nice as she seemed on TV. Poppy decides that she can be a nice person and be famous at the same time. Her father has organised a surprise flash mob in the food court to show his support of Poppy. After being embarrassed, Poppy realises if she can be as brave as her father, she will be alright.

The nerves kick in as her father is doing the hair and makeup for the performance and Poppy decides not to wear her glasses for the musical. She has come to terms with her different style of performing but wearing glasses doesn't fit with what she imagines a star looks like. When Jeff is late to show up, her father unveils his secret plan to perform on stage with Poppy instead. Poppy is shocked at her father's costume, along with the rest of the town and tries to find a way to tell him that she doesn't want to perform with him, but Jeff shows up just in time and Poppy's father isn't needed. Mr Pat helps calm Poppy's nerves and get them ready for showtime.

Poppy is worried she has hurt her father's feelings by not performing with him and misses a cue and walks on stage too early because she isn't wearing her glasses. Jeff stops her from running away and Miss Lily talks to her about what it means to be a great performer on stage. With help from Jeff and Miss Lilly, she overcomes her stage fright and delivers a fabulous performance with thanks to Mr Pat and a music mashup. Miss Lilly tells her parents that when Poppy starts acting classes, she could have a career as a star on stage rather than online. Poppy now believes it, too.