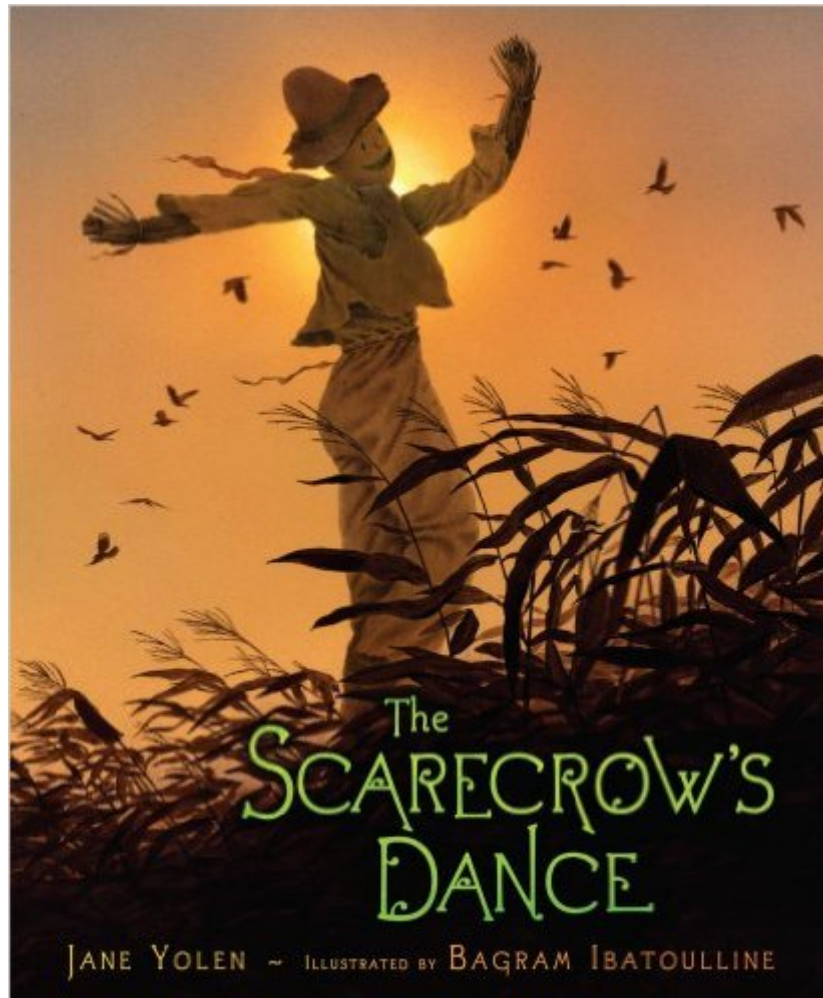


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# The Scarecrow's Dance



## Synopsis

Jane Yolen introduces us to the fickle scarecrow, who decides to leave his station and dance away the fall night. He leaps through the fields until he reaches the farmhouse, where he sees a small light in the window. Inside, a boy is saying his prayers, and he offers up a special prayer for the corn that will be harvested in the morning. Humbled, the scarecrow knows what he has to do: He returns to the field and watches over the corn as only he can. Masterfully told, with illustrations by award winner Bagram Ibatoulline, this book has all the makings of a new classic.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: AD1000L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers (August 25, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1416937706

ISBN-13: 978-1416937708

Product Dimensions: 9 x 0.4 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (46 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #316,662 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #167 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Where We Live > Country Life](#) #782 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Values](#) #927 in [Books > Children's Books > Holidays & Celebrations > Halloween](#)

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

The moon was high over the fields while the lonesome scarecrow continued his solitary watch over the now mature corn. It was autumn and the gentle winds of the summer began to cool and whip through the fields, tearing at his shirt and blowing parts of it across the darkened field. He began to dance in the wind, flung this way and that. Even his straw leg whipped up and reached to the sky when a burst of cold wind hit him. Whish! Whish! He "left his place" in the field and ran down a corn row as a Prairie Dog watched in amazement."He jogged a rowAnd trotted backAlong the cornfield'sDirt-piled track,While high aboveHis painted Head,The crazed and cawingBlack crows fled."The scarecrow danced and swayed through the farm past the tractor, past the Holsteins, the

barn and the two sleeping pigs. He skittered by the old horse drawn hay mower sidled against the barn and came into view of the farm house. He peered into the window and saw a little boy on his knees praying. "Please . . ." The scarecrow listened carefully and suddenly a single tear began to fall down his cheek. What did the little boy pray for that could make an old weathered scarecrow weep? I was utterly impressed with the quality of this book. I loved the autumn theme and the message that everything and everyone has a special purpose in life, including the lowly scarecrow. The art work uses a darkened palette, keeping with the fall equinox when the days become shorter and everything appears to be much darker in the countryside. The rural parent and child may be able to appreciate the country theme more as the scenery is familiar. I just loved this story of the lowly scarecrow, the heart and soul of the farm!

Length: 3:00 Mins

Beautifully illustrated, a unique story, with some word choices I wouldn't have picked (for the younger kids it is recommended for). But still, a nice book.

Jane Yolen deserves praise for offering a distinctive view of the iconic scarecrow. Her picture book attempts to fuse magic and faith, silliness and somberness. The results are uneven; the poem's tone is often gloomy and foreboding; awkward words interrupt the rhythm of rhymed couplets. For example, Yolen chose "forlorn" and "singularity" to complete rhymes but children would more easily understand "sad" and "miracle".

He danced past tractor  
In the field.  
Still waiting to  
Bring in the  
yield.  
Past cows who lay down  
In the grass  
And watched him  
As he, silent, passed.  
He danced by  
barn  
As red as blood  
And two pigs sleeping  
In the mud.  
The "red as blood" description bothered my sons (ages 6 and 5). They asked me if that meant someone was hurt.

While the poem suffers from jagged rhymes and tone, the illustrations are outstanding. Bagram Ibatoulline captures twilight's soft colors, the breezy look of an evening wind rushing through the corn fields and a soft, cheerful scarecrow.

In summary, *The Scarecrow's Dance* deserves three stars, crediting its unique storyline while the illustrations deserve no less than five stars. Together, the picture book earns four stars for a net score of four stars.

What a beautiful book this is! Jane Yolen tells a beautiful story of a scarecrow who wants to be free, until he discovers how important he is as a scarecrow. There's a moral here: when you want to find who you really are, look at the relationships in your life. But the special appeal of this book for me is

Bagram Ibatoulline's gorgeous illustrations, somewhat in the tradition of Maxfield Parrish but with an emotional power all their own. The text is simple but telling verse. Together text and pictures are rhapsodic. If you value really beautiful picture books, don't let this one get away from you.

This very short story, beautifully illustrated tale about a scarecrow who accidentally wins his freedom from guarding corn but ultimately returns to his post (no pun intended). As promoted, it is correctly geared towards very young children to reinforce the concept about being true to a promise. What I did not read in the reviews of this book before I bought it (perhaps I didn't read back far enough!) was that the theme of book is based on religion. Not a problem for many folks, but I was surprised at the religious angle introduced at the end. It seemed to come out of nowhere. Because of this I gave it three stars. While the book is nicely done and I will be giving it to my young nephew, I feel that other parents with other views may be unpleasantly surprised when they reach the end of the book.

This is a beautiful book. The binding is superb. The illustrations are superb. The story, in rhyme, is a wonderful "Morality Play" in the medieval sense. A scarecrow, freed from his post by the wind and enjoying his new freedom, overhears a boy praying that, among other things-"And bless tonight Our old scarecrow Who guards the fields And each corn row So that tomorrow, When we reap, There will be lots Of corn to keep." Realizing that he has an important job that he alone can do, he returns to the field and his pole. There's plenty to teach in this book. Most important is a sense of duty and responsibility, both underemphasized in our "gimme it and gimme it now" culture. Furthermore, there are enough words unfamiliar to a young child (among them forlorn, tolled, jogged, cawing- the list goes on) that there's an opportunity to expand that child's understanding and vocabulary while reading this beautiful story. If there were more than 5 stars to rate this book I'd rate it higher. It's a winner!

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