



2018

# Swallow's Dance

Maryn Wheeler

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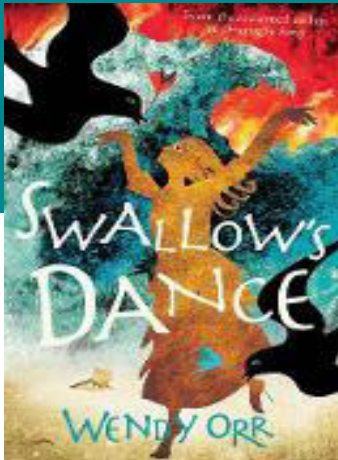
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## Book Review

### Swallow's Dance

#### Author

Wendy Orr

#### Illustrator

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#### Reviewer

Maryn Wheeler

#### Rating

Outstanding

#### Level

Intermediate, Young  
Adult

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#### Pages

274

#### Year

2018

#### Publisher

Pajama Press

#### ISBN

9781772780628

As an upper-class priest-folk, Leira is training to be a priestess for the goddess of her island. When a girl becomes a woman in Leira's clan, the Swallow Clan, she learns songs and dances to offer the goddess of the island. Beginning on the first day of her learning, the earthquakes bring tsunami devastation, and Leira is forced to help her newly crippled Mama and slave-woman Nunu survive. Her father and brother return from sea long enough to move them off the volcanic island to a new place with a new goddess and a new social status as refugee. Leira must leave behind her old habits and priest-folk mindset to survive and care for her family. In the end, she finds hope through creativity, hard work, and the goodness of friends.

Orr brings to life an imaginative story from the Bronze Age through prose and free verse. This creative novel would appeal to fans of Shannon Hale. The strong Leira is heroic as she figures out life through changing cultures, social status, and emerging womanhood. This book speaks about girl's menstruation. In the Swallow Clan the priest-folk sing songs to the goddess. This singing becomes an important coping skill for Leira as she sings for the sun to rise, her mother's spirit to return, or in mourning another tragedy. In addition, throughout the story, Leira has a conflicted relationship with water. It has brought so much destruction, and yet is vital to her family's survival. Leira finds purpose and place in learning a trade and realizing she is capable of love and sacrifice. This original story weaves a tale of strength, loyalty, and resilience.