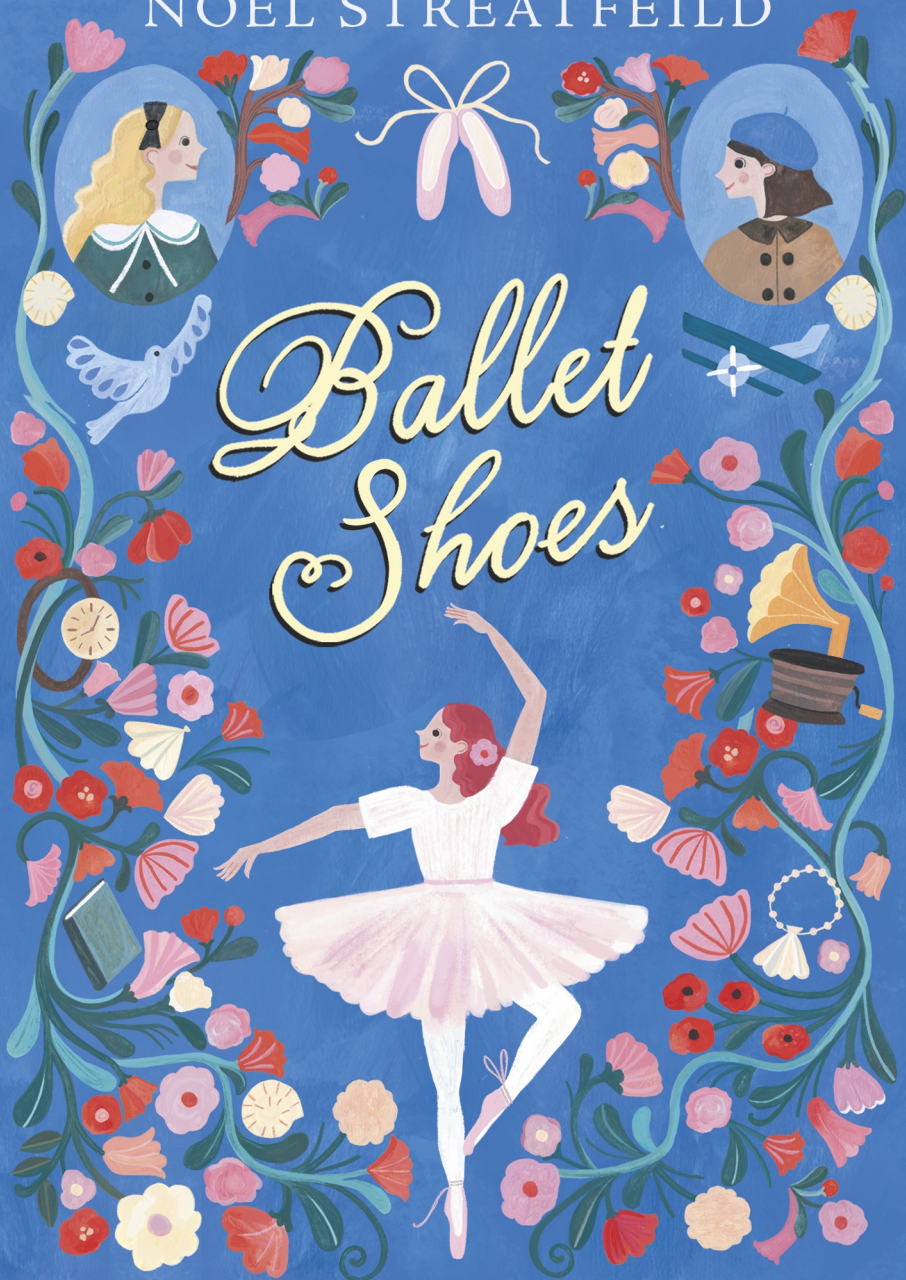


Penguin



Readers

NOEL STREATFEILD



Contents

People in the story	4
New words	5
Note about the story	6
Before-reading questions	6
Chapter One – Great-Uncle Matthew’s fossils	7
Chapter Two – The boarders	11
Chapter Three – The Fossils make a vow	16
Chapter Four – The Children’s School of Dancing	22
Chapter Five – <i>The Blue Bird</i>	25
Chapter Six – Pauline’s new dress	30
Chapter Seven – Pauline learns a lesson	36
Chapter Eight – <i>A Midsummer Night’s Dream</i>	41
Chapter Nine – Pauline’s money	45
Chapter Ten – In the history books	48
During-reading questions	56
After-reading questions	58
Exercises	59
Project work	63
Glossary	64

CHAPTER ONE

Great-Uncle Matthew's fossils

The Fossil sisters – Pauline, Petrova and Posy – lived on Cromwell Road in London. They lived with Sylvia, Gum's **great-niece**, and Nana. Nana **looked after** the children, and she looked after Sylvia before that.

“Gum” was the children's shorter name for **Great-Uncle** Matthew. The Fossil sisters did not remember Gum, but he was a very important person to them. Many years before, Gum went away, and he never came back. Sylvia and Nana told the girls many stories about him.

Gum liked to travel the world. In every country, he found fossils, and he sent them home. Each room in the house had fossils in it.

One time, Gum went away on a ship. But there was an accident and the ship went under the water. Many people on the ship died, but a baby girl lived.

Nobody knew the baby's name because her parents died. Gum took the baby back to England with him.

In England, Gum tried very hard to find the baby's family, but he could not. Everybody said, "You must give the baby away." But Gum always took interesting things home with him. He carried the baby home to Cromwell Road.

"Sylvia, I have a very special fossil for you!" shouted Gum, at the front door.

"Gum, you're home!" said Sylvia. She was sixteen then. "A baby," she said.

"A baby!" shouted Nana. "Mr Brown, who has time to look after this baby?"

Nana was very angry with Gum. Then the baby made a noise and Nana looked at her for the first time. Nana smiled.



“Which room can we put the baby in?” she asked Sylvia.

The baby had Sylvia’s old room, and Nana looked after her. Sometimes Sylvia helped, too. Sylvia chose the name Pauline for the baby.



A year later, Gum got **sick**, and he went into hospital. There, he met a Russian man with a baby. The man was very sick.

“What will I do?” he said to Gum. “I have a baby girl, but I’m going to die.”

“I’ll look after her,” said Gum. “We have one baby at home – we can have two.”

Sylvia called the baby Petrova because she wanted her to have a Russian name.

Gum got ready to go away again and Nana spoke to him. “Please don’t bring home any more babies. I can only look after two,” she said.

Gum was too frightened to carry the third baby home. He sent her with a letter and a pair of ballet shoes. The letter said:

Sylvia,

This is the daughter of a ballet dancer. The father died, and the mother doesn't have time to look after a baby. I'm going away for a long time. I'll give you money for the next five years.

Your great-uncle,

Matthew

P.S. The baby's name is Posy. I'm sorry, but it's true.

Four months later, Gum sent a box for “The Little Fossils”. There were three necklaces inside it.

They did not hear from Gum again for many years.

CHAPTER TWO

The borders

Sylvia and Nana did not have much money, and Gum did not send any more. Only Pauline got new clothes, because she was the oldest. Then Petrova and Posy wore them after her.

Pauline looked very pretty in her new clothes. She had lots of light hair and big blue eyes.

Petrova looked very different. She had dark brown eyes and black hair.

For a long time, Posy did not have much hair. Then everyone was **surprised** to see her red hair.



Pauline and Petrova started at a school called Cromwell House. They wore dark green coats and hats. One day after school, the children had a big question for Sylvia.

“What’s my second name?” asked Pauline. “At school today, they called me ‘Pauline Brown’. But my second name isn’t Brown because I’m not your family.”

“Your second name can be Brown. What other name can I give you?” said Sylvia.

“Gum called us his fossils,” said Petrova. “Could ‘Fossil’ be our second name?”

“That’s a great name!” said Pauline. “I’m Pauline Fossil, and you’re Petrova Fossil. But Posy can’t be called Fossil.”



“Why not?” asked Sylvia.

“Because Pauline and I are at school now and Posy is only a baby,” said Petrova.