



Crossing Niagara: The Death-Defying Tightrope Adventures of the Great Blondin

Matt Tavares

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Applaud Matt Tavares's latest feat — a gripping tale of real-life daredevilry perfectly balanced by stunning illustrations.

"Monsieur Blondin is to cross Niagara Falls this afternoon, or perish in the attempt." — *Troy Daily Times*, June 30, 1859

When the Great Blondin announced that he was going to walk from America to Canada across the Niagara River on a rope that was more than 1,100 feet long and just 3 inches wide, hanging 160 feet above the raging river, people came from everywhere. Some came to watch him cross. Some came to watch him fall. Some thought he wouldn't show up at all. But he did show up. And he did walk across the river. And then he did something else amazing. He crossed the river on that tightrope again and again, adding another death-defying flourish each time. Matt Tavares's gorgeous, riveting account of the daredevil of Niagara Falls is sure to hold readers in its grip, just as Blondin's feats enthralled those spectators on the cliffs more than one hundred and fifty years ago.

Crossing Niagara: The Death-Defying Tightrope Adventures of the Great Blondin Details

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Author : Matt Tavares

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From Reader Review Crossing Niagara: The Death-Defying Tightrope Adventures of the Great Blondin for online ebook

Magdalena says

This non-fiction picture book is far better for its illustrations than for its text. The artwork manages to convey the beauty of Niagara Falls, the suspense of Blondin's tightrope performances, and the emotions of the people pictured. (Such as Harry Colcord, who reluctantly agreed to ride on Blondin's back on a couple occasions) But the text is a bit dry. I was a little bit underwhelmed right from the beginning, because the passage about Blondin's childhood is isolated from the rest of the story and far too brief to generate interest in Blondin's life and career as a whole. It's almost as if Tavares wasn't sure whether he wanted this to be a biography or an account of a specific event. But I think that the value of the illustrations outweighs the shortcomings of the text. As a whole, the book is a worthwhile read.

Betsy says

Picture book bios are so interesting: this one is about the Great Blondin, a tight-rope walker, who spent his life longing for the next death-defying adventure. When he decided to walk a rope across Niagara, no one believed he could do it. But of course he did--and many times. He even carried a guy on his back! Tavares' illustrations are excellent, even stronger than the text.

Samantha says

I knew someone had crossed Niagara on a tightrope, I just didn't know anything about him or her. This is the story of the Great Blondin and his multiple crossings in 1859 and 1860. As usual, the illustrations are stunning. You won't find me on a tightrope any time soon!

Thank you to the publisher for providing me a copy to review.

Laura Harrison says

Wonderful addition to the Candlewick Biographies series. Concise biography with phenomenal illustrations by Matt Tavares.

Samantha says

A picture book that celebrates the many thrilling feats that circus performer the Great Blondin performed between 1859-60. The watercolor, gouache and pencil artwork gives readers an up close view that helps them fully appreciate the skill and artistry the Great Blondin brought to his stunts and allows them to play the part of amused spectator all at once.

An author's note and selected bibliography make up the back matter. Highly recommended for grades K-6+.

Cara says

Tavares' narrative biography of The Great Blondin will have readers mesmerized, much like the book's subject did during his tightrope feats. This little-known historical character performed amazing stunts over a very dangerous arena, Niagara Falls, even carrying a man on his back during a crossing. The watercolor, gouache, and pencil illustrations dominate the pages, complimenting the entertaining text with realistic, full-color scenes. Children in grades 2-5 looking for a unique biography will want to take a look at The Great Blondin's story.

Ruth says

I love learning about new people or events through picture books and this was a great one! Very adventurous and fun!

Nancy Snyder says

This riveting account of the Great Blondin, one of the daredevils of Niagara Falls, is sure to engage readers. A perfect blending of text and illustrations that just might encourage a search for more stories by Matt Tavares.

Margie says

For children who don't much about Niagara Falls nor the Great Blondin this is a great introduction to both. Niagara Falls are a treasure shared with Canada so readers will be introduced to some geography as well. When the Great Blondin was young he was already doing tightrope acts. His prowess and reputation grew. Then he decided he wanted to walk across the Falls. It is so hard to believe someone would really attempt this feat. The book is informative as well as exciting and readers in middle elementary grades won't be disappointed.

Jonathan says

Entertaining enough story for the ten minutes it takes to read and having recently visited Niagara it explains why it has become such a tourist destination. I can only imagine how different the area would be today if it hadn't been for Blondin's antics. Honestly one of the most disappointing things I've witnessed is how detached from nature you actually fell when at Niagara. Blondin did a great job of bringing people to this area and unfortunately it quickly turned into a place to do so much more than just check out the awesomeness of nature.

Ruth Anne says

In 1859 the famous tightrope walker, the Great Blondin, made his dream come true. He crossed the majestic Niagara gorge, just down river from the Falls, on a tightrope that was only 3 inches wide and 160 feet above the rushing water. Spectators came from every direction. Blondin thrilled the crowd with a “series of amazing tricks.” He did the impossible and something that had never been done before. The story of his remarkable feats brought even more people to see for themselves. Blondin gave more than a dozen thrilling performances at Niagara Falls in 1859 and 1860. Matt Tavares tells the daredevil’s story in a carefully written and well researched account. Breathtaking watercolor, pencil and gouache illustrations capture the grandeur of both the natural beauty of Niagara Falls and Blondin’s adventures.

Margie says

Every individual has their limits. Looking over the edge of a balcony to the floor below is plenty challenging for some. For others walking along the narrow ledge of a mountain path is like skipping down a neighborhood street. For them the higher they can go the greater the challenge, the better the view.

America's oldest state park, Niagara Falls State Park, is located in New York. In its entirety Niagara Falls stretches from the borders of Ontario, Canada to New York State. It is actually composed of three falls, the American Falls, the Bridal Veil Falls and the Horseshoe Falls. One man over the course of a single year found a place in history books by traversing the divide. *Crossing Niagara: The Death Defying Tightrope Adventures of the Great Blondin* (Candlewick Press, April 12, 2016) written and illustrated by Matt Tavares is his story.

My full recommendation: [http://librariansquest.blogspot.com/2...](http://librariansquest.blogspot.com/2016/04/crossing-niagara-death-defying-tightrope-adventures-great-blondin.html)

Christina says

This nonfiction picture book tells the story of Jean Francois Gravelet's many times crossing Niagara Falls on a tightrope in 1859 and 1860. Gives brief biographical information (he joined the circus and did his first public rope crossing at age 5!), and an author's note fills in the rest of his life story. I liked the nice realistic watercolor illustrations, which include fold-out pages showing his many tricks on the tightrope. Bibliography; one line of dialogue, unsourced.

Shannon says

What a great book! Both of my kids loved the suspense of the real life tight rope walker "The Great Blondin." The book explains how Blondin had a mission to not just tight rope walk across Niagara Falls, but do many different stunts as well! Great illustrations and a great story!

Jackie says

A very short biographical account of Jean Francois Gravelet, also known as the the Great Blondin, who crossed Niagara Falls many times in the 19th Century. His performance of the death-defying feat was witnessed by many and incredibly he never fell. He attempted many feats which left the audience scratching their heads.

Crossing Niagara: The Death-Defying Tightrope Adventures of the Great Blondin barely touches the surface of this man life's and how he came to attempt this daring spectacle. It begs the reader to search for more information. May be a great read-aloud to introduce the selection of Bluestem Nominees for 2018.
