Ballerina in the Elevator

by andlat

Hudson was fed up with his project partner. No matter what, Madison seemed determined to make him miserable. Last Saturday, she had come over so early, he had still been in his Minecraft pajamas.

The Costume Box
2025

Chapter 1

Ballerina in the Elevator

Hudson was fed up with his project partner. No matter what, Madison seemed determined to make him miserable. Last Saturday, she had come over so early, he had still been in his Minecraft pajamas.

“You can still work on our project.” She said. “They're cute! I think my little brother has the same ones.” He glared at her, but she smiled so sweetly, he almost thought he had imagined the barb.

So this Saturday, he told her in no uncertain terms that they would be doing their project at her place. To his surprise, she agreed.

“Yeah, your house was a little far for me. But, Saturday I'm at the Clarion Theater.”

“What? Why?”

“Helping some friends with their performance. I'll probably be done before you're there. I know you like to sleep in.”

“What time?”

“Oh, whenever you can make it that morning.” Girls were so annoying sometimes! She acted like he should just know what time works!

He walked into the lobby and it took at least ten minutes before he found someone. Thankfully, they knew who

Madison was and led him through labyrinthine corridors and stairways, heading ever down and deeper into the depths of the theater.

“Thank goodness you're finally here!” She ran over and gave him a friendly hug. “Well, come on in!” She pulled him by the hand into a large dressing room practically teeming with teenage girls. He immediately felt out of place.

“Uh”

“It's fine. I just gotta finish up a few more things and then I know a little side room where we can work on our project. Easy peasy, right?” She patted his shoulder. “I promise you won't have to see any girls in their underwear. Wow, that's a blush!” She laughed.

“What kinda show is this?” He asked.

“I'm so glad you asked. You didn't read the marquee?”

“The what?” Madison looked as if she was trying not to laugh.

“Abby, come over here.” One of the teenage girls walked over. “This is Hudson, my partner for the big science project.”

“You're tall. How old are you?”

“Twelve. He's in school with me.”

“Ah, early bloomer?” He stared at her, confused. “Do you dance? This room is only for dancers.”

“Uh”

“He was just asking what the performance was.” Madison said. “Abby's the prima ballerina.” Hudson tried to keep from making a face. Ballet? That frou-frou stuff? “See?”

“I do.” Abby said.

“Huh?” Hudson felt like he was out of the loop.

“I told Abby and really everyone here that you don't have a true appreciation of ballet.”

“Well-”

“It's not a big deal.” Abby said reassuringly. “A lot of people just don't understand it.” She gestured over to a poster of a guy in tights lifting a ballerina up over his head. Hudson blushed as he realized just how tight the guy's tights were. “See? It really requires a lot of strength and athleticism.”

“I guess.” Hudson said. The girls exchanged a knowing smirk behind his back.

“It's not all tutus and frills.” Abby said, grandly throwing open the doors of a large cabinet. It seemed to be stuffed full of just what Abby said ballet was not all about. Tutus and more tutus.

“He doesn't seem impressed.” Madison said.

“That's okay.” Abby said. “He'll get there.”

“Maybe,” Madison tried her best to make it sound like she was just thinking of this. “Hudson'll benefit from getting to try ballet himself.”

The assembled ballerinas seemed to move so fast. One minute, they were grabbing him and dragging him over to a stool, the next he was in his underwear.

“Tighty whities, cute. I told Andrea you wear them!” She snorted. “What? I sit behind you in Algebra, I see ‘em poke out of your pants sometimes.” She patted his knee. “White tights over tighty whities. Almost poetic.”

“Madison.” He pleaded, but tights, a leotard, and then a tutu all came out of the cabinet, all in a startling white.

“You're going to look great.” She said as the ballerinas forced him into the outfit. “Your grand debut!” She grinned from ear to ear as they parted and Hudson stood there in a tutu.

“Get this off me!” Hudson growled.

“Do you really want to be in your underwear in front of all of us?” One of the ballerinas asked. Hudson sobered when he realized he did not know where his clothes had gone.

“Why?” Hudson asked, looking right at Madison.

“You made fun of that ballet we watched in English class. I heard you and Johnny going on and on about it.”

“So? He started it.”

“Ooh, we can check if he's available to come join you!” Madison snickered. “Bet he'd love your tutu!”

“I don't know how to dance.”

“Getting ahead of yourself, aren't you?” Abby said. “We all

gotta get ready first, so you're gonna need to wear a blindfold."

"What?"

"Keep quiet or we'll gag you too." One of the ballerinas said as the blindfold plunged him into darkness. Madison seized her chance to snap a few photos of Hudson in his get-up, but she had to get to her seat.

"I'd better go find my seat. Dancers only back here." Madison grinned at him one last time, even though he could not see her. "Sure, I take ballet at the rec center, but I'm nowhere near your level, Hudson."

"Madison!" He called after her, turning toward what he hoped was the exit.

"Don't move too much." Abby called. "We don't want you to get hurt before the show!"

"Break a leg's metaphorical, Hudson!"

It felt like an hour before the blindfold came off. Hudson's eyes barely had time to adjust to the light as he was poked and prodded over to another stool.

"Time for hair and makeup!" Hudson's hands were held against his tutu as they attacked his face.

"Such long lashes!"

"Fit for a ballerina!"

"These lips!"

“You're so pretty, Hudson!” Hudson had never thought of himself as pretty, but when he saw his face in the mirror, he felt tears well up. What had they done to him?

“What's that?” He asked as something descended down onto his head.

“Your wig. We all wear them so we look identical.” Hudson did not think he could ever look identical to a bunch of girls, but they were certainly giving it their best shot.

“Come on, this isn't fair. I can't dance and do you really think I deserve this?”

“Deserve what?” He looked around at the half circle of ballerinas.

“Uh, you know…” His voice tapered off.

“If you had any idea how much hard work we put into getting here,” Abby said. “You'd feel honored that you're getting to join us on such short notice.”

“But… I'm a boy.”

“Doesn't matter. Only ones who'll know that are us and you.” Abby said. “To our waiting audience, you'll be a beautiful ballerina the same as any of us.”

“You can't do this!”

“We'd better get up there. Twenty minutes to curtain.” Hudson was forced to his feet.

“Let's make sure our guest of honor gets in first.” Abby said.

In where, Hudson wondered until he saw that they were heading for an elevator.

Abby pushed him through the assembled ballerinas and he was the first one to get on, ballerina after ballerina piling in, lifting or pushing down on their tutus so that as many of them as possible could fit inside. Hudson was wedged against the wall, surrounded by ballerinas in tutus, their tights pressing up against his. He fought back tears.

“I… I appreciate ballet.”

“What was that?” Abby asked, standing very close to him in the snug elevator.

“I appreciate ballet. Isn't that what you want to hear? You put so much work in and I'm a jerk for not seeing that.” Abby beamed.

“If you appreciate it, you must be so excited to get to perform!”

“But I can't dance!”

“We'll figure something out.”

The solution ended up being entirely unorthodox. Abby and another ballerina named Amanda wove the ribbons of their slippers and the ribbons of Hudson's together so that he was tethered between them. Taking his hands, they performed a quick combination and Hudson found himself stumbling along in whichever direction they went, their tight grips holding him up.

“It'll be a little awkward, but in a crowd, no one will know.” Hudson felt faint.

“And this way,” Amanda said. “You're in your tutu for as long as we're in ours.” Hudson looked at his captors. They seemed so elegant in their ensembles and he just felt ridiculous.

Bombastic music began to play. Abby and Amanda took their places in the line of ballerinas and Hudson had to go along with them. They smiled and launched in high prancing steps out onto the stage, dragging the reluctant boy turned ballerina with them.

Hudson had no way to know how long they danced, but it felt like a lifetime. He fought back tears under the blindingly bright lights as they danced and danced, then danced some more. Finally, just when he wondered if this was all some hyper realistic nightmare where they would never stop dancing, they left the stage to thunderous applause.

“That went well.” Abby said, panting.

“You were a star, Hudson.” Amanda said, patting his shoulder.

“Can we please go change?”

“Hudson! We have to go back out there to curtsy for our adoring audience!” Abby said, scandalized by the very thought.

“Curtsy?” He squeaked.

“Oh, right. Under all that makeup and the tutu, Hudson's technically a boy.” Amanda said.

“Coulda fooled me. Oh, we're just teasing, Hudson. Come on, show us your best curtsy.”

A few other ballerinas gathered around and Hudson received a very thorough clinic on the art of the curtsy. At least he was able to move his legs on his own now that Abby and Amanda had removed the ribbons. All the same, they kept a very close eye on him.

“It's time!” The announcement came and Abby and Amanda grabbed Hudson's hands.

“Your nails are horrible!” Amanda exclaimed.

“We'll get you some nice falsies before our next show.” Abby said, winking at him. Hudson stared at her in horror and she laughed. “Let's go, ballerina boy.”

During the performance, they’d had several rows of ballerinas between them and the audience. Not so for the curtsy. They headed right downstage and the trio curtsied in unison. It had been so drilled into Hudson that he was already into his second curtsy before he considered just not doing it. He had been to plays where the women bowed or just waved.

“Back to the elevator?” Hudson asked meekly after they left the stage again.

“You're really eager to change.” Abby said with a smirk. “But I like you better like this.” Hudson felt a twinge of fear, but he noticed everyone flowing toward the elevator.

For the trip down, he was not against the wall. Instead, they

put him right in the middle with everyone pressing their tutus against him and telling him how pretty he was and what a great ballerina he had been. It's almost over, it's almost over. Hudson told himself, but the elevator seemed to take twice as long going down. Worse, Madison was waiting for him in the dressing room, her teeth every bit as white as his outfit.

“That was…” he didn't even have words. He would have given anything to shove Madison out of the way and run, but he knew she had far more allies down here than he did.

“Oh, you were great. It was a little hard to see you from my seat during the actual performance, but when you came out for curtsies.” She grinned. “The bluehair next to me didn't like it, but I got some great photos.” The way she emphasized the word great, he knew he wouldn't agree.

“I'd better-”

“You can't!” Madison interrupted. “I need photos. Like need need need!”

Madison had apparently spent their entire time apart thinking up poses for Hudson to do. She took photos with him in every single ballet position, with Abby, Amanda, and countless others making suggestions. By the time Madison declared them done, Hudson was the only one still in a tutu.

“Remember, ladies!” Abby declared. “Leave the dressing room tidy. No tutus left out and about!”

“So I can finally take this off.” Hudson said, unsure of just where to begin.

“Not quite.” Madison said, voice ever so slightly tinged with guilt. Hands seized Hudson and he found himself being tugged back toward the closet where all the ballerinas’ costumes were.

“Let me go! I've done enough!” Hudson heard the rip of duct tape and Amanda taped his wrists above his head in what he now knew, thanks to the photoshoot, was fifth position en haut. “What's going on!?”

“We've got another show in a few hours.” Amanda explained. “This'll be easier than getting you undressed and dressed again and all made up. Plus it'll give you some more time to think about how hard it is to be a ballerina.”

“Just be glad we didn't put your hands up so high, you're stuck on your toes.” Abby remarked.

“You can't leave me like this!”

“It's just for a couple hours.” Amanda said. “Then you'll get to dance again.” She closed the double doors, leaving just enough light for Hudson to see all the tutus hanging up around him.