Freddy

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The sequel to This is Ballet As the recital draws closer and closer, will Freddy ever get used to wearing a tutu?

The Costume Box
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Chapter 1

Freddy - Chapter 1

From the moment he returned to the changing room, muscles still aching, Freddy had one thing on his mind: tutus. Thursday was only two days away and he had to wear a tutu. An actual, bonafide tutu. Well, he wanted to do ballet, didn't he?

By the time he had gotten home, showered, and was getting ready for bed, his mind was made up. Tomorrow afternoon, he would have a few hours home alone. He would try on a tutu then, just so he wasn't wearing it for the first time at class on Thursday. The girls were sure to sense it and mock him.

"I'll be a boy in a tutu." He told the darkness and his pillow. "They're gonna make fun of me no matter what." He sighed, but knew there was no way around it.

Wednesday afternoon came and Freddy had almost talked himself out of it, but knew it needed to be done. He pulled on his tights, his leotard, and then did up the slippers. He could put it off no longer, he thought, walking over to his closet and grabbing it: a tutu.

Freddy ran his hands over it, trying to get used to the feel. What was even the point of a tutu? He did not know. He almost went over to his computer to see if he could find out, but knew it was just his brain trying to put it off. He took a deep, fortifying breath and stepped into it, attaching it to his leotard.

"I'm wearing it." His voice wavered. It stuck out in all directions and felt so alien. Well, that was why he was putting it on. With a sigh, he wondered what now? Should he just wear it or? "Guess I'll try some ballet." He felt the tutu bounce slightly as if nodding.

Freddy quickly ran through everything he could remember from class that did not require the barre, stumbling as he tried to keep his balance standing there in the middle of his room, between some old slippers and a book that he had kept meaning to pick up off the floor. Don't get distracted, he muttered to himself.

It was only when he relented and went in front of his mirror, using his desk as a makeshift barre to rest a hand that Freddy really got to consider his new tutu-clad look.

"Tendu, plié." He recited, trying his best to mimic Madame's pronunciation. They had done this whole pattern for most of class on Tuesday, so he felt like he had it down pretty well. "Tendu, plié. Rond de jambe, rond de jambe, retiré." He nodded to himself as his legs went through all the motions as if he had been doing it for longer than just one class. The tutu hardly even seemed there. It blocked his view of his toes, but that was what the mirror was for. What was next? "Pas de chat, I think?" The name was hard to remember, but he thought he was right. He pranced, that was the only word for it, to the right and then back to the left, his jaw dropping. The tutu made sense now. Somehow, it added to the motion and made it look more graceful. He did it again, nodding as he confirmed. Then, it sunk in. He would have to do that in front

of a class of girls tomorrow. They would probably fall over laughing!

He ran through the moves a few more times, sobering as he realized he did still look fairly awkward. He understood the moves in theory, but the grace with which Madame had demonstrated them was still missing. Did he even want to be graceful? That was ballet.

Freddy's feet ached from all the tendus, so he decided to run downstairs and get a drink of water. No one would be home for - no, trying to calculate it would only jinx him, he knew. It took so long to take everything off and he was far too impatient from thirst, so he went downstairs. He knew it was a mistake the moment he tramped down the stairs and his tutu bounced wildly. Well, he was almost to the kitchen and the pitcher of ice cold water Dad always kept in there.

He filled one of the tall glasses and downed it in two mighty gulps, quenching his thirst. Now to return upstairs and remove his tutu. Then again, there was one thing he had not tried yet. Did he dare? Did he actually want to do this?

Chapter 2

Freddy - Chapter 2

Freddy remembered, before he had a leotard, tights, and definitely before the tutus, he had put on some old long johns from that time Grandpa had tried to take him and Derek ice fishing, the closest thing he had to what the dancers wore, and tried to mimic their moments. Back then, he had never imagined he would be stepping into pink tights, a pink tutu laying in wait next to him. He sighed and shrugged. It would be worth it. At least, he hoped it would.

"Can't believe you're actually wearing it!" Gwen, the prima ballerina from the last recital, said as Freddy emerged. "How's it feel wearing a tutu?"

"It's fine." Freddy shrugged, trying to not notice the way their legs all looked in their tights. "You're all wearing them too."

"Well yeah, but uh" she seemed confused by his nonchalant reply, but quickly recovered. "So you really want to be a ballerina?"

"No, but I do wanna do ballet. If it means skipping around in a tutu or whatever, I'll deal with it." Gwen's face lit up as she suddenly understood.

"So you want to do ballet, but you got stuck doing dainty girl ballet, huh?" She smiled as Freddy shrugged and nodded. "You do know what we'll all have to wear for the recital, right?" Before Freddy could ask, Madame clapped her hands.

"Alright, grand entrance, girls! I mean, everyone." I want to do ballet, Freddy thought with determination as he began to skip around the room in his tights and tutu. I want to do ballet. "Aaand ballerinas to the barre! Tendu to the side!" They moved almost as one, pointing their legs out so that only the tip of their toes touched the floor. "Very nice! It's always amazing how much more seriously students take it once they're wearing their tutus."

Thanks to the mirrors before them, Freddy could see that he wasn't just doing ballet. As he elegantly held his arms up and pointed his toes, he looked as much a ballerina as any of the girls around him, their tutus and motions matching perfectly.

"Everyone face the barre, up on your toes, and put your right leg out behind you as high as it'll go. But keep it straight, Tara! I see you trying to cheat there." She nodded approvingly, even as she could not help but smile at their efforts. It was always so fun to do this on the first tutu day. It was like a room full of ballerina flowers the way their tutus stood out as they stretched their leg up and up. "Try to hold it as high as you can, but don't hurt yourself. I'm going to come down the line and see what we can do for a few of you." Freddy saw her come over to him. "Not bad for your second day." She gently grabbed his ankle and began to lift. "Let me know if it gets to hurt too much. A little uncomfortable is just the muscles stretching." She smiled at him. "You're at a bit of a disadvantage, but trust me, if you keep at it, by the recital, you'll be as flexible as the girls."

Freddy did keep at it, going to ballet twice a week. His

friends at school wondered where he was going while they went to practice, so he eventually had to admit to them that he was taking ballet, taking care not to confess in earshot of Tyler, the meanest kid in his class, if not the whole school. To his surprise, his friends all shrugged it off. He even learned that Logan's cousin Max took ballet for a while. He thought about asking if Max had worn a tutu, but knew that was just asking to be teased. Not that Freddy's big mouth didn't get him in trouble in other ways. It always did.

"Hey, Gwen?" Freddy asked as they milled around before the grand entrance for class. "Why do we skip so much at the start and end of class?"

"It's fun." Gwen said. "Plus, it really is a warmup. Don't you think? Why?"

"Don't you like it?" Beth asked, overhearing.

"Not... not really?" Freddy allowed. "It's embarrassing, especially with the tutu." They were close enough as a group that he could be honest with them, right?

Chapter 3

Freddy - Chapter 3

The day of the recital finally arrived, which meant, Freddy's mom insisted, he needed to take a shower.

"I took one last night!"

"Take another one now." Mom said. "Don't you have to be in your tutu before your ride gets here?" Freddy sighed. "Ballet blitz and then shower."

Freddy sighed again, louder this time, before doing a few quick steps from the program. At least a shower would get him out of doing more! He hurried upstairs before Dad and Derek came in from their yard work to make him do another ballet blitz.

It felt right to don his luckiest pair of underwear, Freddy thought, so that's what he did. He stood there in the middle of his room in nothing but them, thinking about nothing in particular. Sure, he was nervous about the recital, but less so about the recital itself and more about the idea of doing ballet in front of so many people. Derek was still so supportive, which unnerved him, and surely seeing Freddy dancing with all those girls again would break him back into old habits. He shrugged. He could not put it off any longer, so Freddy donned his recital costume, the sequins seeming to taunt him as he looked at his reflection in the mirror. At least it was a break from pink, he thought. They probably added the sequins because blue is a boy color. It's still a tutu,

he reminded himself. He fought the now deeply ingrained desire to put on his recital smile as he descended the stairs to his waiting family.

"Fredster's all geared up!" Derek said, which only made Freddy feel more ridiculous in tights and all his ballerina stuff. Mom snapped a few photos of him on the stairs and Freddy only then realized he had his arms out gracefully above his tutu without even realizing it. He hoped he hadn't been doing ballet in his sleep!

"Jess's mom just texted me they're on their way." Mom said. "Nervous?"

"Naw. I don't think so."

"Give us one last ballet blitz." Freddy groaned at Dad's request and prepared to do a few quick moves – no pas du chats, that was for sure!-- , but Mom intervened.

"Now, now. No spoilers for the recital!" Freddy breathed a sigh of relief, and then a second one as he heard the sound of a car in the driveway. Setting his hands on the tutu as masculinely as he could to keep it from bouncing, he headed out to the dark blue car with a girl, Jess, standing beside it in a ballerina outfit that perfectly matched Freddy's, though her hair was up in a bun and far blonder than his.

"You'll be sitting in the middle." Jess said by way of greeting. "It'll be a tight squeeze, but it's a short trip to the auditorium." Freddy climbed in, mumbling a greeting to the girls already within. He caught Jess's mom eyeing him as he

got situated, surrounded on all sides by tutus overlapping his own, clearly trying to decide what sort of boy willingly puts on a tutu and becomes a ballerina. I won't have to wear it for forever, Freddy thought.

Almost as soon as they arrived, Jess grabbed Freddy's hand and ran inside, their tutus bouncing frenetically.

"C'mon, I know where we need to go. This is my second recital." She said proudly. Freddy was thankful for the guidance, but realized that he was nervous as he saw how big the auditorium was!

"Is every seat going to be filled?"

"Probably not." Jess said. "Besides, with the lights on, you'll only be able to see the first few rows." She grabbed his hand again. "Let's go. We gotta get makeup on before the audience gets here."

"Makeup?" Freddy remembered doing a community play when he was little. He had had to wear stage makeup so that the lights didn't make him look like a ghost. He felt a little relieved as he realized what that meant. All the same, he stood there nervously as Jess got hers done. That sure did not look like the stage makeup he had worn! She looked pretty!

Chapter 4

Freddy - Chapter 4

Freddy was not dead. HIs head felt like it was spinning as he sat in the hospital. Everything had happened so fast that only now was it sinking in that he had been rushed into this room, still in his tutu and a face full of makeup. Where had his parents and Derek gone? Didn't they realize how terrifying it was to go from a car accident to sitting alone like this?

He was not actually alone. There were two other kids sitting on a bed a short distance away, trying to make it look like they were not staring at him curiously. The nurse who had brought him in here had told him their names, but he had still been too embarrassed from the doctor telling him how pretty he was and how he could not have been hurt if his tights had not been that ripped. Worst of all, he was all but certain that the hospital now had a record for a nine year old girl named Freddy who had come in from a car crash. He had tried to tell them he was a boy, but they did not seem to believe him.

"What?" His frustration over the whole situation boiled over as he caught the kids staring at him again.

"You go talk to her." He heard the girl whisper to the boy, who had to be her brother. She wore purple pajamas with a unicorn on them. Freddy much preferred the boy's pajamas adorned with baseballs.

"No, you."

"I can hear you!" Freddy resisted the urge to stomp his foot. It would hardly have been that imposing in a ballet slipper. The girl walked over.

"Hi, my name's Kinsey. Are you a ballerina?"

"I guess." Freddy muttered, his anger simmering down into sullenness.

"Uh, do you have a name? Me and Leon are in the hospital for our tonsils."

"Tonsilses?" Leon chimed in. Kinsey rolled her eyes.

"But Diane said you were in a car crash? That's crazy. I fell off my bike and scraped my knee and one time I fell off of the jungle gym and split my lip open."

"Freddy. My name's Freddy."

"Oh. Is that short for..."

"Fredrica? Francine?" This was doing nothing for Freddy's temper.

"Freddy. I'm a boy. Named Freddy." Kinsey's face scrunched in confusion, but then lit up.

"Why are you dressed like that?"

"It's what's required for my class's recital."

"Oh, so the girls wore that and what did the boys wear?" Kinsey asked.

"Boys can't do ballet!"

"I'm a boy, named Freddy! I just..." he remembered what mom had said in the car. "Played a girl in the recital." It wasn't true, and it pained him to say so.

"See?"

"Boys can too do ballet." Kinsey said authoritatively. "Tell him, Freddy."

"It's true." Freddy said. Leon eyed Freddy's outfit. "I only wear the tutu and stuff cuz it's the uniform."

"Can we see some ballet?"

"What?"

"Well, we're not allowed to watch TV after eight, so it'd be more fun than sitting around."

"I was just in a car crash."

"Yeah, but you're fine. You don't even have a band-aid on." Freddy nodded. He had been checked for a concussion, asked how he felt, and that was that, other than being told he was the prettiest little girl the doctor had seen all day. Hadn't mom or dad or whoever filled out the paperwork put down that he was a boy?