# Gymnastics

*by andlat*

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The Costume Box
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*Chapter 1*

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“I’m so sorry you had to put on pants for the first time this summer.” Cora said, rolling her eyes. “What are you complaining about? You’re not the one mom signed up for tumbling.”

“What even is tumbling?”

“Cartwheels and somersaults and stuff.” He snorted and she hit him with her gym bag. “Trust me, I’m not thrilled.”

“Well, we’re here.” He pointed to the community center at the end of the block.

“Didn’t daddy say you have to escort me all the way to class? To make sure I don’t skip it like I skipped tap?” He groaned.

“Fine.” She smiled. It wasn’t like she hated her brother, but when he got in one of these sour moods, she could not help but torment him. “We’re inside.” He said.

“And I still could escape. Mom and daddy paid a lot for these classes.” Ethan groaned.

“Seriously? Fine.” He marched off with such frustration, she almost expected him to grab her hand and pull her along.

“There you are.” Mrs. Mallory said, standing by the

gymnasium door. “You’re one of the last ones to arrive.” She allowed herself a slight smile. “The way your mom talked, I thought you wouldn’t show.”

“They arranged an escort.” Ethan said, clearly looking to leave as soon as possible. Cora grinned.

“Yeah, but I’m really looking forward to this. Oh, Ethan, can you hold this?” She pushed the gym bag into his arms. “Need to tie my shoe. Loosy goosy shoelace.” She kneeled down as a strange noise emerged from Mrs. Mallory.

“Well, we’d better get a move on, Cora.” Ethan thought she was reaching for Cora’s gym bag, so he held it out only for Mrs. Mallory to grab his wrist.

“Hey!” He pulled, but she held him tight.

“Cora, come on. You came all this way. You owe it to your mom to at least try a class.”

“I’m Ethan, not Cora!” Ethan looked down at his sister, who had nearly fallen over from her laughter.

“Uh-huh. Whatever you say.” The way his sister was cackling, this had to be some sort of joke, but he couldn't shake the feeling that the teacher wasn't in it. That was impossible though. He was obviously a boy and not his sister. Why did she keep calling him her name? “Come on, Cora.” She began to drag the confused boy into the gymnasium. “You’re doing this class even if I have to dress you yourself.” Delighted, Cora followed but Mrs. Mallory noticed. “Oh, Ethan. You can leave. It’s girls only.

“But I’m not a girl!” Ethan protested.

“I’ll take your sister from here.” She gave Ethan another tug as if to warn him against another outburst. “And don’t even think about dropping that bag, Cora.”

Since Mrs. Mallory perceived her as a boy, Cora – the real Cora – was unable to follow them into the locker room. She had no clue what exactly transpired in there, but almost fifteen minutes later, her brother emerged, still being dragged by the arm but now wearing a sparkly pink and white leotard. The long sleeves and near bikini bottom looked especially ridiculous on him. She had made herself pack it, knowing all too well that all this might fail and she would be the one in it. Worth it, she thought as he reluctantly joined his new classmates. Did he naturally have those feminine curves or was it the leotard shaping him? She dismissed the thought, but figured she could ask him. After his class, she snickered. Who knows? She thought as she left the gymnasium to go to the arcade down the street. Maybe he’ll like tumbling!