This is Ballet?

by andlat

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The Costume Box
2022

Chapter 1

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"I heard it's a punishment."

"I heard that he's a total sissy and wants to be a girl."

“Maybe he just likes ballet?”

“Yeah, right, Gretchen. Most of us are only here because our moms want us to do ballet like prissy little girls. Why would a boy sign up for this?”

On the other side of the too thin wall, Freddy could hear the girls speculating about him. He sighed and got dressed. He had never believed he would have to wear the exact same uniform as the girls. Why didn't more boys take ballet? What did it mean when the teacher had said he should ‘get used’ to wearing the same thing as the girls?

A knock at the door startled him. He knew what that meant: it was time.

"Coming." He called. He took a deep breath, curling his toes in the ballet slippers. They felt so strange. It was like he was barefoot and wearing shoes at the same time. He took a few steps and hoped he didn't slip and fall on his face on the wooden floor of the studio itself.

"Line up right there, girls. And Freddy." The teacher said, hands on her hips. She got to wear black, why couldn't he? Because she's the teacher or something, he thought. Still, you're here, Freddy. Make the most of it. "Freddy, let's have you right here in the middle. That way you can watch the girl in front of you for the warm-up."

"Wouldn't it make sense for me to be last then?" He asked. The teacher just smiled.

"Alright, Beth, start us off." Why were they standing there, not even on the studio floor, Freddy wondered until he saw the girls in front of him skip forward, hands on their hips. He quickly mimicked them, feeling ridiculous as they began a lap around the dance studio, right past the mirrors so Freddy could see how silly they all looked. He would have laughed if he didn't look even goofier trying to mimic their form.

He groaned inwardly as they did their exaggerated skip past the large windows. Everyone passing by could surely peg him as a boy in a line of girls, doing this. Couldn't they warm up with jumping jacks or something?

"Now everyone to the barre!" He hoped that they would just walk, but instead, they skipped over in single file and took their places. "Plié." The girls all squatted and Freddy stared at them in confusion. "Oh, that's right. Freddy, you're still new to this. Here, how about you come here and stand by Gwen? She was our prima ballerina in the last recital, so she's the perfect person to learn from."

"Uh I don't have to skip, do I?" The girl next to him snorted.

"Only if you want to?" The teacher said in confusion. Blushing, he took his place behind Gwen. "Gwen, plié. Now, Freddy, you try." He gave it his best attempt, fully aware that everyone was watching him. "Alright, that was good. Here, how about you put both hands on the bar and just focus on the legs." Freddy only felt more exposed as the girls to his left and right did their elegant pliés and he lowered himself down, over and over.

To Freddy's surprise, they then moved on to what looked like stretches. It was not long before his whole body ached. This was ballet? He hoped for a break, but none seemed to come. Everyone else made it look so effortless.

"Freddy, can you come here?" He left his place by the barre and stood next to the teacher. "Since you're new, I figured you'd be the perfect demonstrator for this." She dropped down to her knees. "Point your right foot out to the side." He did so. "Nope, point your toes." So far, so good. "Now it's gonna get a little tough. Curl your toes and foot down so that they touch the floor." She grabbed his slippered foot and helped him. "Keep your left foot flat." He looked down at his left foot. Wasn't it flat? "Girls, come down here. Freddy's doing it perfectly." If Freddy had not felt like he was on display before, he did now as three or four girls got down on the floor and stared at his foot. "Alright, back to the barre everyone. I want us all to practice this."

Freddy felt like he might collapse into a pile of sore muscles by the time it was the end of class.

"Very nice work today, ladies." The teacher said. "I hope everyone takes a chance to rest before we reconvene on Thursday. We've only got a few months before our next recital, so we'll start wearing tutus again then." Freddy's eyes widened. He had thought his parents were joking when they had bought him the leotards with tutus. "Freddy, do you have yours?"

"Yes ma'am."

"Ah, he is a sissy." One of the girls whispered to her neighbor loud enough for Freddy to hear.

"Wonderful. Alright, grand withdrawal, girls." Freddy wondered what that meant up until it was his turn to join the skipping train back toward the changing rooms. This was ballet?