

Dance Machine

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Andy was a shy boy that was very interested in a cute girl in his English class. He always wanted to talk to her, but had no way to approach her. They had different interests and very different friends. Coming soon, there was a Spring Formal Dance at his school. It was going to be his chance, he hoped, because he had a plan: he would become a dance machine!

Angelee really liked to dance. She was always dancing to music in the hallways and singing songs on the bus. She was part of the dance team, too. She had good moves. Andy had none whatsoever, but he had found a ballroom dancing class offered at the community center. He was going to take the class, learn how to cut some rug, and then impress her. Maybe then she'd talk to him.

His mother dropped him off at the community center for his first class. It was terrifying to try something so different; his palms were sweaty, and his stomach felt queasy. The other students were all older than him. There was a white-haired granny teaching the class, but she was flowing across the dance floor like water on a tile floor. It was surprising to see her twirling about along with the music, with a much younger partner, too. She clearly had a lot of good moves, so Andy paid attention.

The teacher showed him how to stand properly, how to move his feet, and how to count rhythm in a song. Every song had different rhythms, but they were mostly similar. He learned to move his feet, and he learned to ignore his fears and just dance. It was strange at first, but being the youngest member of the class helped, because everyone wanted to help him and see him succeed. The older boys in the class treated him like a younger brother, offering advice and showing him what to do. The older girls were kind and patient, but they were old enough that he didn't have to be nervous, because it was like dancing with an aunt.

When the Spring Formal came around, he bought his tickets and waited. Most of the songs were fast, bouncy, group-dancing songs. He didn't know how to dance to them, even if he understood their rhythms. Then a slow song came on. He had a friend from another class that he asked to dance, Judy, a girl he'd known for years. She was in on his plan, and had already agreed to dance with him.

Andy and Judy danced across the floor, surprising everyone. He had always been the quiet boy. Now he was a star on the dance floor. Most of all, Angelee looked impressed. When he finished the dance, she actually came up to HIM and asked him to dance. The next slow dance was theirs. His plan had worked, and he'd learned something fun and new!



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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. Why doesn't Andy talk to Angelee?
 - A. She's mean.
 - B. He's weird.
 - C. They have different friends and interests.
 - D. They don't speak the same language.

2. What is Andy's plan to get Angelee's attention?
 - A. He's going to learn to dance.
 - B. He's going to send her a letter.
 - C. He's going to invite her to his house for dinner.
 - D. He's going to call her on the phone.

3. What does Andy think about his class at the very first class?
 - A. He's excited.
 - B. He's nervous.
 - C. He's not worried at all.
 - D. He's feeling cool.

4. Why does Andy like being the youngest member of the dance class?
 - A. The others all ignore him.
 - B. The girls are way prettier.
 - C. The girls are old enough he's not nervous, and the boys are supportive.
 - D. The boys are too old to consider him competition.

5. Why is everyone surprised by him at the dance?
 - A. They didn't think he'd show up.
 - B. They didn't know he danced so badly.
 - C. They are surprised his mom is not his escort or something silly.
 - D. They didn't know he danced so well.

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