

Dance Class

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Tara's favorite class at school was dance class. It was an extra thing that her school did this year. They'd never done it before. It was a new experience for everyone. At first, she hadn't thought she'd like it, but she decided to give it a chance.

It was weird to have to hold hands with a boy and dance. The steps were okay, and the music was okay, but boys were not really okay. The teacher was nice and funny, and she got them used to working together as a team. Then it wasn't so odd working with a partner.

As the lessons went on and she learned new dances like rumba, salsa, merengue, and the polka, Tara really began to enjoy herself. Even being with partners wasn't bad. In fact, she started enjoying dancing with partners who tried hard and knew their steps. Some of the boys thought it was just a joke, and they didn't try hard. They wasted time joking and stepping on her feet. She hated dancing with them, but she politely took her turn with them anyway.

That was another thing she learned while she was dancing: to be a proper lady. She'd never thought much about it before, but the teacher expected her to behave like a lady, which meant she had to accept dance partners and pretend to like it, even if she didn't. That was being respectful and courteous. Just like life, you sometimes have to do things you don't want to, the teacher had explained. Yet, that didn't mean she didn't enjoy dancing with a boy who had the proper height and good steps to be a great partner.

As the classes neared their end, some twenty lessons later, Tara was delighted to hear she'd been selected as a finalist. That meant she would be representing her school. She'd wear a fancy dress and go dance at a competition. She and her partner, a great dancer named Todd, would be one of four couples from her school.

The competition was like something out of a storybook. There were dresses and shoes and music. Everyone was smiling, wearing great clothes, and hair was done nicely. Ribbons were tied and flowers were handed out. It was hard not to be nervous, but it was hard not to feel special, too. She and Todd, along with her teammates, danced their way through the competition. It was tough, and all the other dancers were so good!

It was sad not to win the competition, but a third place finish was respectable, something her school could work on next year. Maybe next year's dancers would come in first place. Tara was proud of everything she'd learned. Her parents were amazed at how good she was. Maybe there was a career in this stuff. Who knew? She just knew she loved to dance, especially the Waltz.



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

1. What new class is Tara part of?
 - A. gymnastics
 - B. karate
 - C. dancing
 - D. choir

2. What is the hardest part about dancing at first?
 - A. holding hands with boys
 - B. learning the steps
 - C. liking the music
 - D. not tripping

3. Which of these is NOT one of the dances listed in the story?
 - A. Hip-hop
 - B. merengue
 - C. rumba
 - D. salsa

4. Who is Tara's partner at the competition?
 - A. Tim
 - B. Tom
 - C. Ted
 - D. Todd

5. How does Tara feel in the end?
 - A. She loves to dance but wants to quit.
 - B. Her feet hurt.
 - C. She wants to learn break dancing.
 - D. She loves dancing and wants to do more.

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