

Sameera's Dancing Shoes

The day is finally here. I've been practising my lines for weeks now and I'm pretty sure they're stuck in my head. I've gone over my cues and my stage directions over and over again in the backyard, the biggest space we have, even in the pouring rain. My Grandma is tired of hearing me speaking in old-fashioned phrases, like a real-life Shakespearean actor.

"Passeth one the tomato sauce, dearest grandmother."

"Please stop, Sameera," she sighs every time, but I can see her smile too.

Now it's Thursday morning, the day of our first ever performance. I can feel butterflies fluttering in my stomach as I get ready for school as usual, but I know that a little bit of nerves is good. Nothing can go wrong today.

Grandma hugs me and I set off for school on my bike as usual, balancing my book bag on one side and my PE bag on the other side. It's heavier than usual because Mr Mendes asked me to bring some boots in from home. Most of the costumes came from our school PTA, but my character needs these big, heavy boots that nobody had in my size. Luckily, Grandma came to the rescue - she had some in the attic from when she was younger.

The day goes as normal. Everyone's a little bit excited about the upcoming performance and Mr Mendes has to work hard to keep us all calm and focused on our morning maths practice. I find myself grinning and looking around the classroom. Everyone looks excited. Everyone, that is, except for Georgia; the shy, quiet girl who has a small part, but it's still the biggest part that she has ever played.

At break time, we have a massive game of stuck in the mud, but I notice that Georgia doesn't join in. She's sitting at the top of the climbing frame, legs swinging as she watches everyone having fun. Dodging Jake's waving arms as he tries to tag me, I jog over to her.

"You okay?" I ask, panting from the running.

"Nervous," Georgia mumbles, "And I've got to do that dance... who puts a dance in a Shakespeare play anyway? I don't want to risk hurting myself by running around."



I nod, wishing there was some way to cheer Georgia up. But she's right. Amad has already grazed his knees tripping over on the concrete and Georgia's going to have to work hard enough to get her dance moves right without hurting herself. Dance doesn't exactly come naturally to her.

The time comes for our dress rehearsal and I pull on my costume and lace up Grandma's boots. They fit perfectly and have that cool, worn look. I stand up and test them out, wiggling my toes. Then, I start dancing.

Wait, what?

The boots are clunky and even over the chatter of the classroom as everyone scrambles into their costumes, everyone can hear me stamping and stomping. I tell my feet to stop, but they don't. It's all I can do not to topple over.

"Sameera, save some of that energy for the audience," Mr Mendes calls out, his nose buried in the script.

"I'd love to," I yell back, as my classmates start to tire of me making a spectacle of myself and carry on getting ready. My feet won't stop tapping. I stumble backwards into a chair, but they keep going, performing a perfect tap dance that is completely out of my control. Suddenly, Georgia is at my side. She kneels down before me and unties the boots. My feet flop down, still at last.

"Are you alright?" she asks, in her calm and quiet voice.

"It's these shoes," I pant, glaring at the boots, "I put them on and now I can't stop dancing."

Georgia's eyes light up, "I think I have an idea..."



Questions

1. How has Sameera prepared for the play?

2. How does Grandma show that she isn't really annoyed with Sameera?

3. Why does Sameera have to bring her own shoes?

4. What does **upcoming** mean?

5. Why is Georgia not joining in with the games at break time?

6. What happened to Amad?

7. What kind of character is Sameera? Would you like to be her friend?

8. What is wrong with Grandma's old boots?

9. What do you think Georgia's plan is?

10. Summarise the story in less than 25 words.
