

## A Dance Lesson Worth More Than Dollars

“It’s 10:30. How far are you?” A caribbean short hair cat in his early twenties texts his friend to see how long he’s going to have to wait by this train station. The somewhat chilly breeze of an autumn mid morning runs through his gray fur.

“Arrived in Jersey about five minutes ago. Three stops left. Should be there in 10 minutes. Sorry for the wait.”

“What wait? We agreed on 10:45. Lol” The cat, named Tommy amusedly corrects his friend and then types “I’m wearing a black hoodie and a pineapple scarf. You’ll see when you get here.”

“Right. Thanks and see you in a bit.” His friend, named Theo responds.

Tommy uses his right paw to pull out his phone while he waits, standing between his car and the train station. It’s 10:33 now meaning it’s another seven minutes till Theo gets here and he chose to stand outside instead of staying in his car while it’s about 48 degrees out. His hoodie is keeping him warm at least as he scrolls quickly through social media. Squeezing in some time to respond back to some friends, acquaintances and other people he had just meant to get back to. Eight minutes later the train pulls into the station for the city in Jersey. About two minutes after that a seven foot two polar bear wearing a gray and black hoodie, a black bag with a Jordan’s logo as well as a yellow Atlantic City cap finishes racing down the train station stairs.

“I’m *huff* here, buddy. Let’s get going.” The bear comes to a stop in front of Tommy and leans down to look in the cat’s direction but not quite in the eyes.

“Yeah though you might want to get a little smaller first. I know you’ve already downsized but I don’t want to risk you breaking my car if you don’t mind, *ehehehe*.” Tommy laughs a bit as he gestures to the car, finding it funny how his polar bear friend didn’t think of how he’d get in.

*Sigh* “I guess a few inches won’t kill my intimidation factor. *Heh*.” The bear stretches out his paw and lowers it a bit causing a light blue glow to surround it as him and his clothes shrink by a little over half a foot.

For Theo is clearly not your typical polar bear. He’s got light blue spots that cover his body but are now mostly covered up by his fall clothes except for the few visible on his face and his uncovered paws. On top of that he’s also got what’s practically a mohawk of black headfur but more importantly he knows magic. Specifically ice and size magics and he’s currently using that size magic to avoid any problems caused by his real height of nine foot ten, almost ten feet. Of course Tommy is no ordinary caribbean cat, for he also knows magic among other things.

And it's one of his many skills that Theo came to Jersey to learn from today as they both get in the red car and drive away from the train station.

"Thanks for letting me go to your house for this. I would have let you come to mine but I just had a bit of kitchen renovation done and I still need to clean up some more of the mess that made."

"Don't worry about it. After all your help with training my magic it's *snow* problem at all."

"**Groan** I walked right into that one, huh?" The bear tiredly looks at Tommy who takes a second to look back at him, almost missing a red light.

**Screech** "*Whew*. Yes though I just *bear-ly* missed the chance for that one." The cat says as he puts the car in reverse just to get it back before the crosswalk, luckily there were no cars behind his.

"*Aha!* Not bad. So what dance are you teaching me today anyway? We've already practiced a couple of the songs you've done for your dance routines and some just to help me better get the basics. I'm down to do another Bruno Mars song or heck a Megan Thee Stallion song, whatever you've thought up this time."

"*Ehehe*. Wait till till we get there."

"Well now I'm definitely excited!"

Theo fidgets a bit in his seat before settling back now while Tommy smiles to himself. He's hoping he'll live up to the bear's anticipation/excitement. The way Theo helped him hone both his ice and water magic was amazing to the point the polar bear actually admitted he was a little jealous of how good the cat had gotten. To think he could make an ice bear jealous with the skill and speed of his spells as well as being able to make shields and other constructs from the varying forms of water. His big friend was impressing him too though and he's said as much, learning 5 almost 6 different dances over the course of three months and definitely improving with his coordination and general moves.

Tommy worries how much he really has left to teach him, especially when it feels like it took him longer to learn from Theo than the other way around right now. The bear likes to tell him otherwise, saying that magic isn't easy and for what it was "you've learned it with more style and style than my clumsy self" but while he does trust his friend he can't but wonder if he's not softening the truth at least a little. Theo has a knack for that. Tommy puts all these thoughts aside though to focus on the road, especially after Theo had to warn him out of almost

rear-ending a light gray convertible in front of them. Tommy backs up a little and then after about seven uneventful minutes of further driving he starts to park.

“We’re here. Unbuckle your seatbelt and follow me, okay?” Tommy says as he finishes parking and the two get out of his average size car with Theo needing an extra few seconds to get out and then a few more to get the seatbelt back in to avoid it getting caught in the door.

The two then walk to the door of Tommy’s house and Tommy gets out the key. He opens the door and Theo and Tommy quickly walk through the house with them passing by Tommy’s mom too distracted by cooking to give them more than an acknowledging glance before going right back to cooking. So they make it to Tommy’s backyard and Theo looks at him with confusion as he puts his bag on the grass.

“Why are we practicing out here? I thought we’d be practicing inside.”

“Ummm, after that time last weekend I thought it’d be better to dance out here. It’ll work better this way trust me.”

“If this is about the hole in the floor or the chair... that broke my fall I totally fixed both of those things!”

“You did but my mom thought it’d be better to do this outside anyway and I agreed.” Tommy says while he limbers up by stretching his gray furred feline limbs.

“Fine though if it’s becoming a problem for me to dance here we can do it at my house instead.” Theo replies while stretching his own ursine limbs to get ready for the dance practice.

“I’ll let you know if we need to go to your house. Could you make an ice dome?... For privacy reasons.”

“Sure.” Theo does what Tommy asks by concentrating as he brings his paws together and then separates them while making a sphere shape which makes his paws glow and ice begin to encircle the current duo.

The dome grows to cover a considerable area around the two aside from an opening roughly the size of a room door. Theo figured they’d need a way to get out of the dome of ice easy but Tommy has other ideas as he uses his own ice magic to seal up the door sized hole and then uses his own magic to turn the ice to water while still keeping the dome shape. This is something Theo helped him practice so the bear smiles as the air warms up a little and they’re encased in a dome now of warm, still closed off and concealing water as opposed to cold, stiff ice. The two

take off their cold weather clothes and Tommy gets out his phone and a speaker that he scooped up from inside the house. They're ready to begin.

"Alright. So the dance we're doing today is actually something Caribbean themed. My family does this one every time we get together, it's called the Dollar Wine. You ready to learn it, bear?"

"Heck yeah, I am! Let's do it!" Theo smiles with excitement, also having family from the Caribbean although a different part than Tommy and his family as far as he's aware.

That unmistakable Caribbean beat starts and Tommy gestures for Theo to watch him first. Tommy begins to first sway back and forth with the rhythm then starts to move his feet back and forth. His hips move side to side with the beat and his arms follow suit. Then when "five cent, ten cent, dollar" begins getting repeated in the lyrics Tommy starts to move his arms and hips in conjunction with that. His arms move side to side at first then up and down and then his hips thrust forward and then back. He alternates doing this with the rest of the dance's moves.

Theo watches and tries to keep track of the steps to the dance while hesitantly starting to mimic them. When Tommy starts the song over and nods his head, that's Theo's permission to start doing the dance too. His moves are shaky and overly meticulous at first especially the hip thrust at the "one dollar" part of the song but he gets there. Soon enough him and Tommy are dancing smoothly to the music. When Tommy feels like Theo's got it down they go back to a song they learned the dance of a week ago and polish up on that and soon an hour or two has passed. The two are naturally tired, working up a good sweat along with some good dance moves, another good day of dancing lessons for Tommy and Theo.

"Did you like the surprise?" Tommy asks as he carefully brings down the dome of water that surrounded them.

"Definitely. Feels good to know another Caribbean dance. We good to go inside?"

"Another-? Oh right, you know how to dance Merengue. Yeah, let's head inside. Ice guys like us deserve some *iced* tea."

"It would be *paws*-itively appreciated right now." The two grin at each others pointless puns as Theo uses a black padded paw yo open the door for his friend to go inside first as they prepare to go have their much deserved drink.