



VIRAL VIDEO SHOWDOWN



BY JEHAN MADHANI

SCHOLASTIC INC.

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CHAPTER 1



"Go, Karma, go, Karma, go, Karma!" There's nothing like hearing a crowd cheering your name . . . especially when that crowd is made up of your best friends! Winston and Switch were my two best friends in the world, and they were cheering me on as I danced my heart out on my front stoop.

I loved to rap and dance, but as much as I loved the spotlight and performing for an



audience, sometimes it's even more fun to just jam with your friends. And I was *feeling* this beat.

"Karma, these moves are next level!" Winston shouted over the music, waving his hands above his head like he was at a concert. Winston Torres has been my best friend since we were in diapers. He's been cheering me on since before we could even speak in full sentences. Rumor has it that "Go, Karma" might have been

his first words. That, or “Action!” since he’s been directing me in his movies and music videos for just as long.



I don’t wanna brag, but I had to admit, Winston was right. My feet had really caught this beat, and these moves were definitely next level. I smiled big back at Winston as I threw in another slide and rolled my shoulders with the music, which was *also* next level. This beat was bumpin’!

“Ooooooh, Switch! Don’t stop that beat!” I called out to my other best friend, Switch. Switch Stein has been our best friend ever since she moved to Hansberry Heights with her mom at the start of this school year. We didn’t even know her last year, but now me and Winston couldn’t have imagined the fifth grade without her. The three of us do everything together, and we always have one another’s backs. She loves music just like we do! And she is a *fire* music producer. In fact, she made the beat that was

blasting out of the speakers on her backpack. Pretty incredible, huh?

“You got it, Karm!” Switch smiled and increased the volume on her backpack speakers. This beat was her best one yet. (I say that about all of them, but it’s true!) It was a fun, bouncy hip-hop beat that made you want to move your feet, and when Switch hit play, I couldn’t help but start dancing. The song was like total dance magic.

Switch and I first realized we loved dancing together when we auditioned for the In-Step Squad, Hansberry Height’s elite dance squad. When Carrie Bautista didn’t let Switch on the squad even though she was *definitely* the best dancer who auditioned, I decided I didn’t want to be on a team like that. Switch and I might not have made the In-Step Squad, but we knew that the two of us *had* to keep dancing together. That’s when we started our own dance crew, the Full Out Dance Crew. Our friends

Megan, Mateo, Chris, and even my dog, Major, are also on the crew. And when we dance together, we dance *full out*. Dancing full out means you dance with your whole heart. Switch taught me that!

“Woo-hoo! Goooo, Karma . . . you’re dancing full out!” Switch called to me from next to Winston, clapping excitedly as I jumped up and down. I grinned at her. She was right. I closed my eyes and swiveled my hips with the beat. By the time the song was over, I had made a whole dance routine!

As the beat faded, I ended with a big finale and finished leaning with my arms crossed. Winston and Switch both leapt to their feet to give me a standing ovation. Like I said, they’re *the best*.

“Karma, that dance was soooo cool.” Winston tried to do the slide I did during the chorus, wiggling his arms. He’s not very good at dancing, but he totally tries.

"You know, I think it might be the best dance I've ever made . . . but I couldn't have done it without that beat. It was totally poppin', Switch! It really made me want to move . . . it was like total dance magic!" Switch blushed.

"Thanks, Karm. I looooved your dance. I gotta try some of those moves. Will you teach me?" Switch asked as she started to do the arm motion from the end of my dance.

"Of course! But you can't learn it down there! Get up here!" I ran over and held out my hand to Switch, pulling her up to stand next to me on the stoop. Dancing with Switch was pretty high on my list of favorite things to do ever, so of course I was gonna show her how to do my new dance. Winston hit play on the backpack speakers, and Switch and I stood side by side.

"So first you cross your fists across your body like you're hitting your hips," I told Switch. She watched closely and quickly did the same move.

“And then when this part of the song comes, you want to sliiiiide!” I slid across the stoop real smooth, and Switch followed me.

“And you clap above your right leg, then you lift your leg and clap under it this time.”

Switch followed along.

“And then you spiiiiin all the way around. And end big with a shoulder roll like this!”

Switch did it just like I had.

“Yes! Exactly like that. You’re doing it!” Before I knew it, Switch had the whole dance down. That didn’t surprise me—Switch is the best dancer I know. She’s also a totally amazing choreographer. She was usually the one who came up with the dances for our Full Out squad. She has an amazing talent for mixing all our different moves—from my steps to Mateo and Megan’s ballroom twirls—to make something even more incredible that felt like all of us! She makes pretty much any dance she does better.

When we finished doing the dance again,

I was exhausted! I took a deep breath and wiped the sweat off my forehead. I grabbed my water bottle and took a biiiig sip.

“Phew . . . I need a sip of water—all this dancing has me sweating!” It was a pretty warm spring day, and I was finally starting to feel a little tired from all that dancing. I was excited to take a breather and lean against the stoop. And luckily, Switch was still movin’. I was happy to watch her do her thing. I hit the play button on the speakers one more time so she could keep going.

Switch started to dance. She was totally getting it!

“This dance is totally, completely incredible!” Winston told me with a smile. I agreed. Suddenly, Winston put his hand to his forehead, shaking his head in realization.

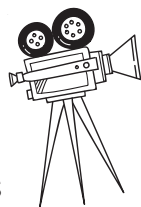
“Wait . . . this dance *is* totally, completely incredible! I should be filming this! *Why* am I not filming this? I gotta be filming this!” Winston

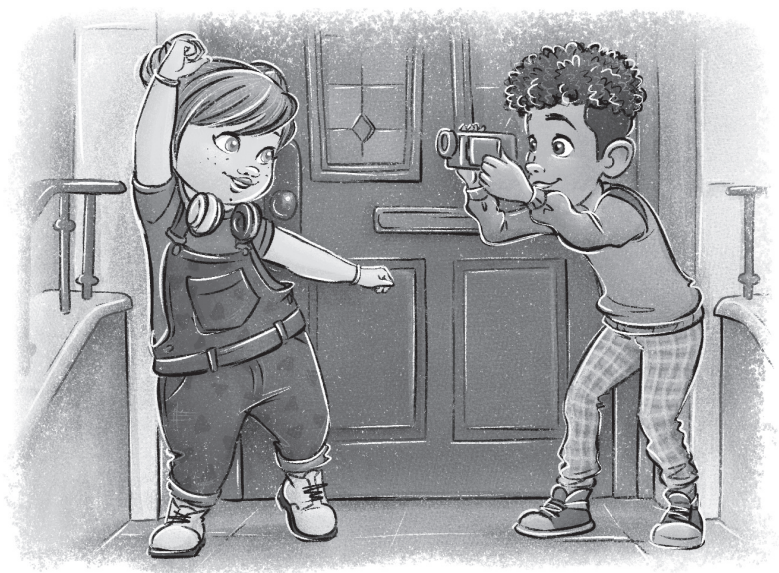
shook his head at himself in disbelief. Winston is a really talented artist, and he loves filming and directing music videos. Sometimes when he gets an idea for a project, his energy comes bursting out all at once and he can't help it. This was definitely one of those times. Winston jumped up off our step, excited to capture the dance on camera. He almost tripped over himself running to get the camera from his bag at the bottom of the stairs. CRASH. Down he goes.

"I'm okay!" He shakily held up his camera with a sheepish grin. Winston could be a little clumsy. He laughed as he held up his camera. "That's why I leave the dancing to you two!" Switch and I couldn't stop laughing.

As Switch did my dance, Winston started filming and quickly went into full Winston director mode, carefully moving around and trying to keep the camera steady.

I giggled as I watched Winston crouch and





stretch and move his long legs and arms into different twisted-up positions to get the camera angles he wanted. He stuck his tongue out in concentration. He looked a little bit like a pretzel.

I leaned over to turn up the volume on Switch's backpack. We were gonna need the music playing loud and clear in that video.

I nodded and clapped along as Switch did the moves. When Switch hit the final shoulder