

Falling for the Salsa Beat

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INT. TENEMENT - APARTMENT - DAY

MAUREEN, very attractive, early 20s, stands in the corridor in front of apartment 6A.

She RINGS the doorbell and waits.

From inside the apartment, loud SALSA music covers any other sound.

INT. TENEMENT - APARTMENT - A FEW SECONDS LATER

A handsome, Hispanic-looking man in his 30s appears on the doorstep.

He smiles.

MAN

Hi.

MAUREEN

Hi, sorry to bother you...I'm Maureen...6D.

MAN

No problem, I'm XAVIER...what can I do for you?

Maureen forces herself to smile. She looks embarrassed.

MAUREEN

I was preparing a cake...I finished the sugar...can I borrow--

XAVIER

(friendly)

Of course...please come in.

Maureen steps inside the apartment.

INT. TENEMENT - APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

Xavier lowers the volume of the speakers.

XAVIER

Sorry...

MAUREEN

Is it Salsa, right?

XAVIER

Yes.

MAUREEN

It's nice...but I am not into it.

XAVIER

Which music you like?

MAUREEN

...I'm a ballet dancer...I like
CHOPIN, RAVEL...that stuff.

XAVIER

You're a dancer...that's great, I'm a
dancer myself--

MAUREEN

Modern?

Xavier erupts into laughter.

XAVIER

Oh no, I dance Salsa with my
partner...you know, shows, movies,
...any place we can find a gig.

MAUREEN

It must be exciting...

XAVIER

It pays the bills.

MAUREEN

How long are you with your partner?

XAVIER

MARIA and I have been together for
five years...she got married two
years ago. She has a kid, PAULITO,...
her husband plays the piano with
ARTURO SANDOVAL...

MAUREEN

Who is he?

XAVIER

Arturo?...He's the best trumpet
player in the world.

MAUREEN

Are you working in any movie right
now?

XAVIER

Next week we star in a Salsa festival...we're in a musical in two months...you know, Off Broadway.

MAUREEN

Cool...

XAVIER

But tell me about you? Are you from New York?

MAUREEN

Oh no, I come from MANKATO, MINNESOTA...my grand-parents were from Ireland. I'm studying at the JUILLIARD...I hope I can make it.

XAVIER

Is it hard?

MAUREEN

It's all practice...many hours a day.

XAVIER

I'm sure you'll do great.

MAUREEN

May I ask you a question?

XAVIER

Please...

MAUREEN

Why you like Salsa so much?

XAVIER

It's in the family...my parents are from Cuba...my Dad is a musician and my Mom was a dancer...she worked at the Copacabana in Havana...my Dad met her there.

MAUREEN

Nice story.

XAVIER

Yes, they were very much in love...I grew up listening to Salsa music...I was a happy kid.

MAUREEN

Are they here?

Xavier's expression suddenly appears dispirited.

XAVIER
They're in jail in Cuba...I don't
want to talk about it.

MAUREEN
I'm sorry...I--

XAVIER
It's okay...that's life.

A beautiful smile returns on his face.

Javier's cell phone RINGS. He answers the phone.

The conversation is in Spanish with subtitles.

XAVIER (cont'd)
Hi Maria, what's up?

MARIA (V.O.)
(sobbing)
Paulito is sick...

XAVIER
I'm sorry, what does he have?

MARIA (V.O.)
I don't know, we go to the doctor
this afternoon.

XAVIER
Let me know what he says...

A beat.

MARIA (V.O.)
I don't think I can come to the
festival--

XAVIER
That gig is very important for the
movie, you know.

MARIA (V.O.)
I know...but I have to stay with
Paulito...you can find somebody
else--

XAVIER
How?

MARIA (V.O.)
I don't know...talk with your
friends...I just can't, Xavier, I'm
sorry.

XAVIER
Okay, take care of him...I hope he
gets better soon.

MARIA (V.O.)
Thank you...I'll call you.

XAVIER
Bye...give a kiss to Paulito.

Xavier closes the cell phone. His face shows angst.

MAUREEN
What happened?

XAVIER
Maria's kid is sick...she can't dance
at the festival.

MAUREEN
Do you have a sub?

Xavier stares at Maureen. His eyes scan her body several
times. He grins.

A beat.

MAUREEN (cont'd)
Why are you looking at me?

XAVIER
I was thinking...do you want to--

Maureen looks at him with a surprised expression.

MAUREEN
What...

XAVIER
Dance with me?

Maureen bursts into laughter.

MAUREEN
Are you crazy?...I don't know how to
dance Salsa.

Xavier smiles while staring at her.

Maureen appears bewitched by his charisma.

XAVIER
Sure?

MAUREEN
I can't--

XAVIER
I can teach you...

MAUREEN
My technique is different, I--

Xavier gets closer to her.

She is magnetized by his nearness.

He gently puts his hands on her hips.

XAVIER
Just follow me...

MAUREEN
I'm tense--

XAVIER
Let yourself go...start on the second
beat of the song...you step forward
on the first measure of the music.

Maureen follows the instructions with indecision.

XAVIER (cont'd)
Be more sensual...you're making love
to me.

MAUREEN
Making love...?

XAVIER
Yes, you're offering me your body.
Move your hips to invite me...

Maureen slowly moves her hips. She exhibits a tantalizing performance.

XAVIER (cont'd)
Yes, like this...now, your feet.

Maureen stands in front of him.

XAVIER (cont'd)
You don't only dance with your feet,
the whole body moves.

MAUREEN
It's so different...in classical
dancing the hips remain rigid while
the legs and feet do all the work.

XAVIER
Try...move your body, follow the
beat.

Maureen starts to slowly oscillate her body.

XAVIER (cont'd)
Good, continue...more fire...more
sensuality.

Maureen follows his instructions diligently.

XAVIER (cont'd)
Now, move your legs, feet and
knees...this leads to hip movements,
then the torso, shoulders and arms...
feel free...be happy...you're a
beautiful woman, show it to me...look
at me as a woman craving for love.

He turns up the sound system. A full, driving Salsa sound
pervades the room.

Xavier and Maureen begin to dance to the magical rhythm.

Maureen gets more and more involved in the dance. Her legs
move with the beat. Her body expresses all her sensuality
and passion for the music.

Xavier smiles. His body follows the rhythm in synchrony with
hers.

They have created a perfect dance partnership.

INT. TENEMENT - APARTMENT - LATER

Xavier and Maureen continue to dance.

XAVIER
Are you tired?

MAUREEN
I'm used to intense practice...

XAVIER
Do you want something to drink?

MAUREEN
Not now...let's practice.

INT. TENEMENT - APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

They are taking a breather.

Xavier feeds the CD player with a new CD.

XAVIER
This is brand new...a band from Cuba.

MAUREEN
What's its name?

XAVIER
LOS AMANTES.

MAUREEN
What does it mean?

XAVIER
The Lovers.

MAUREEN
Uhm...

The music starts. A captivating, slow, rhythmic, Salsa melody.

The lyrics are in Spanish. No subtitles.

MAUREEN (cont'd)
It's a beautiful tune...what the lyrics say?

XAVIER
It's the story of a man and woman falling in love while dancing the Salsa.

Xavier paces slowly towards her and delicately embraces her.

She closes her eyes and falls into his arms.

She leans her head on his chest and gently caresses his hair.

MAUREEN
(whispering)
You're amazing...

XAVIER
It's not me...you're falling for the
Salsa beat.

The seductive rhythm enslaves their bodies.

Xavier slowly reaches her lips. Maureen gazes at his sweet eyes.

They kiss voluptuously.

The End

