

Square toed purple slides, stacked heel – high enough to give her calf that come-hither arch. Estrella knew what to wear to turn the boys' heads. She trotted up the concrete steps to the CYO dance, snapping those heels like her Uncle Ramone pounded his flamenco boots on Saturdays. Those steps rose steep to the gym's front doors, high enough that the boys at the bottom might peek under her skirt. Not that it would matter. Mama insisted, like she did on every dance night, that Estrella wear a leotard over her "dainties," the word mama used for panties. Mama didn't know about the new leotard, same color as the other, the one that unsnapped at its bottom. Only the right boy would ever know about those snaps, too.

"Este, where'd you get those slings?" Nancy took in the shoes, devoured them, her eyes wider than the time she dropped the sodium pellet into the water beaker in chemistry. Estrella saw those shoes sparked passion in her best friend, at least as much as boys did for Nancy.

"In El Paso." Estrella kicked her foot behind her in a curtsy to remove the shoe by its heel, using her opposite hand. She'd practiced the move in the mirror after her English homework every night. It delivered the effect she wanted. Her sateen skirt rode up her brown leg just far enough to make Benny Jasin look over at her. The blonde he was chatting up turned around and scowled at Estrella.

"So you shopped at the new Shoe Barn in the mall?" Estrella shrugged at Nancy building her fantasy.

"No, I couldn't find anything that fit me there. Hey Nance, 'scuse me a minute?" Estrella took back the slide and slipped it on with the same curtsy, just as Benny walked up to her.

"Wanna dance one, Estrella?"

"Only the slow ones, with these." She smiled while she pointed her toe at him. Benny took her hand and looked over her sateen. She could see him squirm, waiting for "Radar Love" to wind down.