

A for Amazing

By Taylor Tong Qiu

The conductor was practicing his bows. The violinists were tuning their strings, and the cellists were plucking at their notes. Everyone was doing their thing, except me. Sweat rolled down my cheeks as my fingers trembled. I was about to play with the grand New Jersey Symphony Orchestra! I had spent months practicing this song just so I could play with the orchestra, and now I was scared! What was I doing?

I looked around. People were sitting down so fast that I couldn't keep track. They sat down like ants crawling around and their colony or like bees buzzing to get their job done.

As more and more people sat down, I took time to notice my surroundings. We were in a nice-sized church. It had stained glass windows on the side and had little rows of wooden benches. I saw my parents sitting on their little bench looking at the stage. I noticed that they were talking to my piano teacher sitting beside them. I looked away because I was afraid that they would notice me looking at them. I watched the sun bloom up in the bright blue sky. It looked so innocent, so nice up there with its bright rays.

Then I saw the conductor walking towards me. He asked, "Are you ready?"

"Y-yes," I nervously replied.

"You better be," he joked. He was kind, but I was too nervous at the time to even think about that.

Time was zooming by. Sweat continued to roll down my cheeks. My fingers continued to tremble, and everything was going wrong. Then before I knew it the conductor whispered, "Get ready everyone! We're about to begin!"

"Uh Oh," I muttered under my breath.

Next, like we practiced, the conductor looked at me straight in the eyes signaling that we were about to begin.

Then he started whispering the countdown. "5, 4, 3..." Then as if out of my worst nightmare, I had played a note. 'A'. I played the note 'A'. But the thing about that note 'A' was that I had played it before anyone had started playing. I had played it before the conductor had even finished counting down!

I couldn't believe what was happening. My first thoughts were what my parents were thinking. It seemed like that moment went on for hours. Hours of wondering. Hours of not knowing what to do. I remember myself thinking about the note 'A' that I had played. 'A' for all not being aware. 'A' for an absolutely embarrassing moment. As my mind ran wild, I remembered the words my teacher had said just days before the performance. "If you make a mistake, then so be it."

The words raced past me like a waterfall rushing down the edge of a river. I thought about it for a moment. I thought about it deeply. I thought about it like the world was going to end if I didn't, and then the next thing I knew I had set my shoulders down, sat up straight, and started playing.

The notes came out of my fingertips like water flowing down a stream. The music raced past me like water rushing down a waterfall. It felt like I was by myself with the music, alone. I blocked out the crowd. I blocked out the fellow orchestra members who were playing beside me. I blocked out any other thoughts from before. I even blocked the embarrassing moment! It was just me and the music, nothing more, and it actually felt good!

After a while I heard the orchestra slowing down. That meant that we were near the end. I remember my piano teacher saying that whenever you slow down, it's probably the ending. Then the music came to a stop. I came back to reality. I saw the small crowd sitting in the little seats before me, erupting. Not erupting like a volcano. Erupting in applause.

As I stood up from my seat, I thought about something; something that I would think about for the rest of my life. The words: "If you make a mistake, then so be it."

Now 'A' no longer stood for an absolutely embarrassing moment. 'A' didn't stand for not being aware as I thought earlier. 'A' stood for Amazing.



About the Author

Taylor Qiu is 11 years old. Not only does he like writing and playing piano, but he also has many interests including geography and history. Taylor also enjoys swimming, playing tennis, and traveling all around the world with his family. Taylor goes to school at Great Valley Middle School in Malvern, Pennsylvania and is in 6th grade.