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Mrs. Williamson

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 I remember feeling, grabbing, hanging onto the pulse of the clock as it etched and pressed its way into my skin, all the while schizophrenic melodies danced voraciously throughout my mind. Months of preparation had come down to one final moment; I felt completely unready. One might say practice makes perfect and I certainly practiced, maybe a little too much. Maybe I had bitten off more than I could chew this time. This would certainly be one of my hardest performances, topped off with a judge who was, or at least thought he was, the Beyoncé of oboe.

 I remember the creak of the door as it swung open on its hinges towards my distressed figure waiting in the hallway. The room slowly became more visible as the door opened to a simple teaching theater with a stage. The brightly lit room where I stepped provided a contrast against the darkness I was about to blindly walk into.

 I remember seeing a man sitting in a desk; my judge. He greeted me with a smile and a handshake becoming of the room he sat in. I offered him a copy of my music but he politely refused, saying he was familiar with the piece. Well, wasn’t I in for a ride.

 For quite some time he sat there, jotting down notes on his paper. When he was finally finished and I was quite worked up, he told me I could begin whenever I wanted. I took a deep breath and as I inhaled, I faltered slightly. The start could have been much better, but instead when it came out it was all I could do to look calm and balance out the nervousness dancing around in my sound.

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The nervousness came and faded occasionally, but always managed to loom in the shadows of my bubble of thought. Then there arose a great struggle within me. I wanted to snap out of this confusion, jump up and slap it in its face. The war between my instincts and my will raged on, fighting endless battles and skirmishes until finally I took control. The wild and untamed music suddenly became much more civilized, the adrenaline pumping through my veins started to subside, and I began to feel different.

 I sculpted the sound with beautiful rolling hills and huge mountain ranges. I took it through vast plains and forests, into the clouds. I changed its colors, first from a light orange, then to a dark blue, next a vibrant green. The music changed as I changed, and I had complete control over it.

 Looking back on this event, I realize how much it impacted me. I learned that day that I was not weak, not timid not shy. I learned to see myself in a more confident light. A once nervous, timid, and shy girl transformed that day into someone who felt like a natural performer. Performing is not all there is to this story. I learned it wasn’t just about the performance that day. Performing includes many different aspects. It is composure, flexibility of thought, awareness, adaptability, expression, communication, and so much more. In a way, I became a completely new person. I understand others now almost as well as I understand myself. Whenever I watch any kind of performance, I’m able to watch with an understanding of their dedication to performing.