

Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2

I rolled my eyes as I stood on the faded green welcome mat. Golden leaves flurried past my feet, restlessly swept into piles only to be scattered seconds later by the freezing winds. I really wished I was at home instead, hungrily gobbling up sweet ladoos and watching Twilight Sparkle galloping through the magical land of Equestria. Instead, I was forced to be here by my mom. She insisted that I would absolutely love playing the piano. But I know myself better. Wouldn't I know if I wanted to play music? But being a naive five-year-old, I was easily bribed by the promise of a doughnut from Happy Doughnut. I could have stood there scowling for hours but soon the door was swung open by a stout Chinese woman, face clear of wrinkles.

“Come in!”, she exclaimed. “Joey is waiting for you in the piano room!”

I smiled half-heartedly before trudging past her along the slippery-slick tiles of the hallway with soft, inconspicuous steps. As I walked, I peeked at the numerous trophies and family portraits with fleeting glances because I knew I wouldn't be back. Upon entering the piano room I could smell the unmistakable odor of pine emanating from incense sticks in the corner of the room. The young woman whom I perceived to be Joey patted the fluffy black chair next to her.

“Come and take a seat. Let's start your class.”

With a heaving sigh, I slumped into the seat.

“So, have you ever played piano before?” she inquired.

“Of course not, I'm only 5 years old!” I exclaimed, feeling annoyed. “I don't even want to play the piano,” I add under my breath.

“Well, I can’t promise that you will love the piano.” She smiled warmly before adding, “But I can promise that you will change your mind about it by the end of class.”

We’ll see about that.” I thought to myself.

“I’m going to play one of my favorite pieces for you: Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2,” Joey said. Before I could even comment about how the name sounded like the word nectarines, she had gracefully raised her hands to the piano, and the music began to flow from her fingertips. The snide remarks that were on the tip of my tongue were immediately stolen by the music that filled the room. Listening to it, I felt like I was hearing the song of a siren; any rational thought I had was gone in an instant as I let my mind flow with the ethereal crescendos, diminuendos, and the hint of a melancholy soul that lingered behind every note. To my surprise, I felt my own emotions reflect the same sadness in the Nocturne. When Joey’s fingers finished their long and emotional dance, I felt myself returning to the real world. “Did you like it?” she questioned, one eyebrow quirked upward.

“I loved it, it had a beautiful flow!” I exclaimed. That was the least I could say about the beautiful piece. It made me imagine a beautiful full moon rising over a cliff as a sophisticated young woman pirouetted, the moon watching her silently.

“Well, I wonder where the sullen girl I saw before went?” she pondered out loud in the same know-it-all voice that all grown-ups seemed to develop.

“I want to play it!” I said.

She laughed before replying, “That might be just a little too advanced for you. First, try to learn your scales.” Begrudgingly, I nod my head and allow her to hold my tiny tanned hands in her large pale ones and place them on the piano. This is when my adventure began. But my

adventure was not that of dragons, mermaids, and princesses. Mine was an adventure through time. It was an adventure of emotion and self-discovery.

After my class was done and I had learned about the different notes, I left Joey's house and got into my dad's car before I quickly slammed the car door shut and put on my seatbelt.

"Well, you look excited, little monkey," my dad said as he looked at my face in the rear-view mirror. I couldn't keep the smile from spreading across my face as my whole body felt alive with excitement.

"I'll tell you if I like the class when I get my doughnut," I replied. Five minutes and a glazed doughnut later, I'm enthusiastically babbling about what I learned, how nice Joey and her mom were, and about the Nocturne that Joey had played. I promised myself that by the time I graduated high school, I would be playing the Nocturne better than Joey herself. What I did not know back then is that every beat and emotion that my body would go through while playing would seep into my being, and any negative thoughts, pressured feelings, and memories that stubbornly refused to fade from my mind would disappear, even if it was for just a few minutes. Maybe the piano wasn't so boring after all.