

In Due Time by Kevin Tai

"Nico, before I forget, I need to see you after rehearsal, please," Ms. Goodman said as she passed out a new piece of music.

"Sure," Nico replied, but his mind was elsewhere. He stared intently at the drum music in front of him. Already, he could feel the groove, so much so that his hands began twitching accordingly.

Nico glanced up to see Mrs. Goodman clap twice, sharply, to signal the start of rehearsal. "I know you've had less than five minutes to look at this piece of music, but I want to focus on sight-reading today, so we're going to jump right in. I don't expect it to be perfect. Okay, here we go. A-one, a-two, a-one, two, three, four!"

The band began playing, and through the squeaks, squacks, and honks of the wind instruments, the slightest semblance of a song began to emerge. Two minutes later, Mrs. Goodman nodded her head in approval, while the wind players caught their breath.

"Not bad, not bad," Mrs. Goodman said. "For a first read-through, we did alright, but it's definitely not perfect."

She looked up from her conductor's music stand. "Nico, great job on the drums. You're an outstanding musician. I hope you reconsider."

Reconsider what? Nico thought, but before he could ask, the band had moved on to the next song.

After rehearsal, Nico walked over to where Mrs. Goodman stood behind her music stand. "You wanted to see me?"

She sighed and pushed her glasses up the bridge of her nose. "Nico, your mother informed me of your desire to quit. Frankly, the rest of the band looks up to you and your groove holds everyone together. Your perfect rhythm has truly earned you the nickname Time Machine."

Nico was taken aback. He knew that his mother didn't approve of the past seven years he had been in band, but the fact that she would go his back to force his resignation shocked him.

"Thank you, Mrs. Goodman," he mumbled as he rushed out the door, ready to give his mother an earful.

When he got home, he stormed upstairs, not even bothering to remove his shoes or backpack. He found his mother sitting behind her computer, but instead of her usual scowl, she wore a smile.

"Nicolas," she burst out, "I called Mrs. Goodman today to let her know you quit."

"I know, Mom. Why would you do that?"

"I've finally realized your talent and passion for drumming, Nicolas. I unenrolled you from afterschool band class to make time for the Pacific Youth Symphony you

were accepted to. I know it's expensive, but I'm willing to pay for your education. You are talented, Nicolas. You know they call you the Time Machine?"

"I do," Nico gushed through his tears. Although he had grown tired of the nickname, now he wished he had a real time machine so he could continue to relive this moment.