

THE BATTLE
By
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PLAY BREAKDOWN

CHARACTERS

DAVION	A Senior in high school who plans to major in music. He has been accepted to Berkley for Saxophone. He has scholarships and plans to pay with money his family has saved since his birth.
MR. RICHARDS	DAVION'S music teacher for all four years of high school.
BARBARA	DAVION'S mother. She is sick.

SETTING

In BARBARA'S hospital room and MR. RICHARDS' band room and office.

TIME

2018, Spring, College audition time of DAVION's senior year.

ACT 1

SCENE 1

LIGHTS UP on DAVION and MR.

RICHARDS in the band room of DAVION'S school. School has just ended.

MR. RICHARDS

Thanks for meeting with me after school, DAVION.

DAVION

Sure thing, teach. What's up?

MR. RICHARDS

I wanted to check in on your Berkley audition.

DAVION

It's not for another two weeks.

MR. RICHARDS

Are you ready? I mean with all that's going on with your mom.

DAVION

It's tough, but it's not going to stop me from getting that scholarship.

MR. RICHARDS

I like that confidence, young man.

DAVION

Weakly

Ha. Yeah.

MR. RICHARDS

Are you sure you're ok?

DAVION

Yeah. I'm ok. I think I am ready.

MR. RICHARDS

You sure?

DAVION

I'm sure. I can play the Mozart for you.

MR. RICHARDS

Ok. Do you want me to accompany you on the piano or are you playing it accapella?

DAVION

Taking out his horn and wetting his mouthpiece.

Accapella for now. I'm still working through the middle section.

MR. RICHARDS

Ok. Ready when you are.

DAVION

Ok.

He warms up with a few scales. Concentrates, then closes his eyes and starts the piece. He plays the piece, it doesn't sound great - his rhythm is off and MR. RICHARDS stops him.

MR. RICHARDS

What happened to those triplets in the middle of the song?

DAVION

I had those completely fine.

MR. RICHARDS

Oh, DAVION, those were not fine! DAVION, I'm worried about you. That's a pretty basic mistake. Are you sure you're okay?

DAVION

Yes! I'm fine it was just a little mistake.

MR. RICHARDS

Okay. Can you try it again starting from the second movement?

DAVION

Yes.

He plays it again, still missing the triplets. He stops. He looks down. he looks up at MR. RICHARDS.

DAVION

I guess I'm not as ready as I thought I was. Can you help me with this middle section?

MR. RICHARDS

I sure can kiddo.

DAVION

Thank you so much.

MR. RICHARDS

Let's label those triplets. We'll go back to basics. You got this.

DAVION

He stares at the paper. He's not sure where to start.

Maybe this song is too hard for this audition. I don't think I'll be ready. Do you think I could do the piece I played at competition last year?

MR. RICHARDS

I think that would be fine.

DAVION breaks down. He is so relieved. He hugs MR. RICHARDS. Then he steps back, embarrassed.

DAVION

It's just been so hard these past couple of months. Preparing for the scholarship, my mom in the hospital, senior year. It's a lot.

MR. RICHARDS

I understand. ... Your mom's in the hospital again?

DAVION

Yes. The cancer is back. They didn't get it with the last surgery. It's not looking too good. I haven't told anybody.

MR. RICHARDS

I'm so sorry bud, your secret is safe with me. Now let's take out that Bach piece and dust it off, so you'll be ready for your audition.

DAVION

Sounds good!

DAVION finds the Bach piece and chuckles

DAVION

What are the odds?

MR. RICHARDS

What's the matter kid?

DAVION

Now I know why I love this piece so much from the competition, that was one of the last performances my mom saw me play live with the band.

MR. RICHARDS

It's a great piece. it won us that competition.

DAVION

Heck yeah it did! One of the greatest days of my life!

DAVION takes a pause and reminisce

I wish things weren't so different now... with my mom. During competition season, my mom made sure I practiced that piece every single day until it was perfect. Tuh, I remember I got so tired of playing, I wanted to quit. it was my mom who told me "no don't quit . you're tired now I get it, but don't quit". As you can see I listened, and now I'm auditioning for Berkeley...only this time without my mom.

MR. RICHARDS

Your mom is still here. She's a fighter and she's not a quitter like her son. These emotions, use them while playing. To anyone else, this is just a regular Bach piece, but you said it yourself there's the meaning behind it- your mom. Use that while playing. You know how to do that already, that's why you're my star player and why you're auditioning for Berkeley.

DAVION

Thank you, but it's just different you know. That's my mom, she's the only one I have and it's a lot riding on me.

MR. RICHARDS

Davion, you're right, it is different now. I know your mom still wants the best for you and wants you to focus on this Berkeley scholarship. It's in two weeks buddy.

DAVION

I know I know, she tells me all the time. I'm confident in this piece, I really am, Mr. Richards.

MR. RICHARDS

I'm glad to hear you say that. Now let's put that to the test. Let's give it a go!

DAVION begins to play the Bach piece, he doesn't miss a note and MR.

RICHARDS praises him on that. They both knew changing the piece was the best.

Jansel - Keep up the great work! 4 down, 6 to go! Remember that back and forth dialogue takes up more 'space' than paragraphs :-)

SCENE 2

LIGHTS UP on DAVION and BARBARA.

He is sitting in a chair. He does nothing for a moment. Then he blows on her hand trying to wake her.