

Tuba Trouble

By Blake Z.

“Maybe we should think about this.”, Dad said, giving a slight frown.

“Come on, I’ve been waiting for this all year.”, David said, a pained look on his face.

David walked into the music shop, determined to get what he wanted. It took a while for his eyes to adjust to the dusty room. The only light was coming from a dim lantern hanging from the cracked grey ceiling. David stared at all the gleaming brass instruments and antique pianos, but only one thing really caught his eye. The shiny tuba rested in a corner of the shop, and David took a step closer to examine the massive instrument. On the very edge of the tuba case, there was a small price tag.

His parents noticed David looking at the case and took a look themselves. When his dad saw the price tag, his face turned a deep shade of pink and he stomped up to David’s mom.

“Did you see that price tag on the tuba? There’s no way we’re buying that thing.”, he hollered. David’s mom looked stunned.

“Calm down, you look like a tomato right now. David has been dreaming about joining the band since he was a little kid, are you going to shatter his dreams because of a little money?”, David’s mom said confidently, standing up taller..

David watched the argument in silence, but he already knew who would win. When David saw his Dad backing down and shaking his head, David knew that his mom had succeeded, but David’s dad wasn’t done yet.

“How about we rent it for a couple of months and see how it goes?”, David’s dad suggested. They all agreed.

The small music shop had been built in the far corner of the town. Many buildings there had run out of business and now were broken down and covered in graffiti. Moss and bits of dried mud covered the ancient sidewalk. Still, it was the only music shop in town and that’s where everyone went to buy an instrument.

Right when David got out of the music shop, he took out the mouthpiece from the case and held it in his hands. He wanted to prove to his dad that he could be responsible for his tuba. Suddenly he lost his grip on the cold metal mouthpiece. It slipped out of his hand and clattered loudly on the sidewalk. David quickly brushed it off and put it in his pocket. He looked around. “Good.”, he thought. His dad hadn’t seen him drop it.

It was soon the first day David got to play the tuba at school. He couldn't wait until band class. He loved everything about it, the smell of strong incense, the tall white walls and even the grumpy teacher, Miss Humptin. They had been learning other things in class like note reading and blowing on the mouthpiece but that’s what he called “boring” and he wanted something new. Something Exciting.

David walked through the white halls and took a seat in the front row of seats. The chairs were arranged in a crescent shaped pattern surrounding a small table where Miss Humptin sat. As usual, she was shouting at students.

“Blaaaarp.” Students who were beginning to play in David’s class were attempting to make a good sound on the tuba, and all failing. Instead, weird toots filled the air. But David was sure he could make a good sound, he had been practicing every night on the mouthpiece. He blew lightly at first, and a faint whining sound came out. David blew harder, but nothing changed. This frustrated David. “Why is this happening?”, he wondered.

When David got home, the school bus pulled away from the stop, spluttering and sighing down the street. He told his parents what had happened during band class.

“It’s okay, you’ll eventually get it right, like everyone else.”, his mom encouraged him. David’s dad just grumbled and walked away.

David knew that if he didn’t learn how to play the tuba in the next month, he would never get another chance to play in band. Every night David practiced and practiced, but the squeaking sound always came out, and every time, his dad stomped past David’s room, angry that David couldn’t even play the instrument and yet he was spending so much money on it.

“Maybe it would help if you blew harder.”, his dad suggested. David got out his tuba and started blowing. The squeaking sound came out but he kept on blowing. Soon his whole face had turned purple. His dad shouted at him to stop, but David just ignored his dad. Just when it seemed like David’s head would burst, a clump of mud came out and made a “splat” sound as it hit the ceiling. Suddenly he realized what had happened. Some mud must have gotten into the mouthpiece when he dropped it. “So that’s what made the bad sound.”, David said, smiling like it was his birthday.

The next day in class, David produced a wonderful sound. Everyone was amazed. Even Miss Humptin congratulated him. David smiled. He could finally prove to his Dad that he could be responsible and achieve his dream.