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English Composition 11000

The empty stage was filled with only me and a microphone. The blinding stage lights focused on me, forming a ring of light from where I stood. My heart rate jumped every second I stood on the wooden stage. Small specks of dust gleamed in the light in front of my face. The stage felt like a sauna filling with steam, but I knew that was not the case. The auditorium was always airconditioned. It was always a perfectly cool temperature. I was running on pure adrenaline.

It was my first year in middle school and it was my first experience having theater class. We were assigned to choose a song of our choice to sing in front of the whole class. I didn't have a piece in mind at the time nor did I have the passion or confidence to execute it. I had earnestly argued for excluding my participation in this assignment for numerous days but to no avail. I listened to many songs before picking one with what I thought were easy lyrics and speed. I settled on "If You Could See Me Now" by The Script. It was an emotional song written by a man who lost his parents and sought some affirmation of their approval and admiration. It was also a song with a great amount of chorus which proved beneficial in trying to learn the lyrics.

I never was interested in liberal arts or really anything academic. I didn't see a point in learning anything that I wasn't going to use in my life. Why should I be memorizing what is inside a cell or who created different genres of theater? I was more interested in sports like basketball and playing video games. I never made much effort to look into the future whether it be success or happiness. I only lived in the present, not in the future or past. But, I grudgingly spent a week trying to cram all the lyrics of "If You Could See Me Now" by The Script into my head. Every time I looked at the lyrics I found myself straying father and father away from my current task. I imagined myself playing a game or going outside instead then cramming words into my brain. As the deadline crept closer and closer I found myself panicking. I pushed my performance to the latest day possible until the excuses and other students ran out. It was too late I remember the creaks of the floorboard as I walked on stage, the crackles as the music started to play, and the high-pitched screech of the microphone as I introduced myself. The gazes from the audience felt like needles poking my skin. My voice echoed back at me in the large auditorium, it felt strikingly loud. My hands and legs grew tense as I became a stiff statue trying to break out of its mold. My brain tried to recall all the lyrics of the song, but it did not matter. My heart worked overtime as I steeled my resolve and gathered every ounce of confidence left in my body. The next few minutes were a mix of forgotten lyrics and off-beat singing. As the song's outro played, I let out a breath I did not know I was holding. As I walked off the stage, I felt three emotions. A mixture of shame, relief, and regret. Relieved that the experience was over, ashamed that I could not overcome my weakness, and regretted what I could have done. I never did like my voice after the experience. I never wanted to stand in the spotlight ever again. I never wanted to walk up another stage.

The song “ If You Could See Me Now” stuck with me after the experience. The chorus played in my head every chance it got. “Oh, If you could see me now”. A message to my past self, the version of me who limited their scope of skills in their comfort zone. I realized I didn’t have the confidence to do anything. I went into every challenge with the expectation of failure. At the time I jokingly told myself all the time that I would never be disappointed if I never expected anything. It was self-sabotage. A harsh method of protecting myself from disappointment and despair. But, I knew the person I wanted to be; someone with the confidence and ability to achieve anything brought to them. Someone who doesn’t freeze when faced with the unknown or new experience. Someone who goes in with a positive mindset. I then realized the importance of public speaking as a skill. The confidence that comes with public speaking is essential to any type of success whether it be personal or general. As said by Michelle Obama “ Your success will be determined by your own confidence and fortitude”. I braved every situation I was placed in, I pushed myself out of my comfort zone, and I pursued all chances for growth. Over time I blocked the toxic chatter I unknowingly replayed in my head and began anew with a positive mindset.

Ultimately, music was an important instrument in my growth in becoming who I am today. From a shy student who limited himself to fun and easy activities. Now I broaden my scope to experience what the world truly has to offer and all the experiences I have gathered are precious to me. Sometimes I like to imagine saying to my past self “ If You Could See Me Now”.