

Speech Night (Not a real story)

Tension was in the air all around me. I could see a thousand beady eyes staring at me, waiting for me to start my speech. I was sweating profoundly and my hands were sticky. My heart pounded like a million jack-hammers beating furiously on wood. My hands clutched desperately at the now slightly wet pieces of paper that were my palm cards. My voice faltered slightly as I began my speech.



It had all started when the school hosted its annual speech night. Unfortunately, I was not a big fan of speaking in front of large audiences and had major stage fright issues. All these years, I have made endless excuses, missed every single night- intentionally. But this year was going to be different. I had decided to make a speech, a short speech, mind you, but a speech nevertheless. Resolute, I stepped onto the stage...



I continued my speech, stumbling a bit here and there. I was about halfway through when it happened- I forgot my lines! I stood, frozen with fear as the cold hand of panic gripped me, crushing my feeble structure in its powerful fingers. Fumbled my palm cards- sweating more, overcome with desperation, I tried to remember my lines. What were they?! Suddenly, a voice whispered in the crowd.

“What's wrong? Cat got his tongue?”

Laughter.

“Or is there a frog in his throat?”

Even more laughter. I was so embarrassed I wanted to sink into the ground.



My throat was dry. I swallowed. It felt like hot water searing my throat. My mouth was cracked as the ground after an earthquake or a drought. I was so shocked for words. My first time speaking, ruined by *this*! I was so upset I felt bitter tears welling up in my eyes.

Just when I couldn't take it any longer, a small voice called to me in my head. A small flickering candle in the middle of a void of darkness.

“You have a responsibility! A commitment to fulfil your goals!” It rang in my head. It was right. I did have a goal. I did need to fulfil my responsibilities. Swallowing down all the unhappiness

and bitterness I felt and forcing down tears, I continued.

Stumbling quite a few times, after what seemed like hours but was only minutes, it was over. A swelling sense of pride built in my body as I stepped off the stage, followed by polite clapping. For the first time in many years, I had done it! I had made a speech in front of an audience! As I walked off that stage, the happiness I felt could not compare to any other degree of joy in my life. It was pure ecstasy, the feeling you had finally done something you wanted to...



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