

Quiet on the Set
By Genevieve Burdine, 5th Grade

“Quiet on the set!” Audra called.

All the noise in the drama room stopped. Aislynn looked up, wishing she could be as confident as Audra.

“Ms. Bella got us a show at the theater in Phoenix!” Audra announced.

Everybody cheered. Aislynn’s new friend Jaylihn told her that the drama club had been trying to get a show at that theater for months.

Audra held up her hand for silence, and the room became quiet immediately. “The bad news,” she continued. “Is that we’re supposed to put on an hour-long show in 2 weeks.”

“WHAT?!?!?”

“Everybody, quiet! We can totally do this. We’re going to vote on the genre and work our way up from there. The options are comedy, fantasy, sci-fi, and romance. Everybody, eyes closed, and raise your hand when you hear the one you want. Each person gets ONE VOTE, no more, preferably no less,” Audra shouted.

Everyone did what they were told. Aislynn tried to decide which genre to do.

“Hands up if you want comedy!” Audra barked. Aislynn debated whether to do comedy or not. What if she was the only one that picked comedy? What if she was the only one that *didn’t* pick comedy? She didn’t want Audra to think she wasn’t cool. Audra wouldn’t be rude about it, but Aislynn was still nervous.

“Fantasy!” Audra called. Aislynn had the same mental debate. Should she vote for fantasy?

“Sci-fi!”

Aislynn couldn’t decide.

“Romance!”

“Alright! Everyone can look now. It looks like sci-fi and fantasy are tied for first, so we can maybe kind of combine them? Like a futuristic thing but also fantasy? What do you guys think of that?” Audra said.

Everyone agreed, so the drama club members started to create the script. One of the many things Aislynn liked about this club was that the members created the script. It wasn’t like most clubs, where there’s the already written script and everyone has to follow it, whether they like it or not. Everyone talked and talked and talked, except for Aislynn. She wasn’t a natural-born speaker. She’d known her friend Alisha since kindergarten, but could still barely talk to her. She avoided talking unless it was necessary.

“What part do you want, Lynn?” Alisha asked. Aislynn glared. She hated it when Alisha included her in conversations like this.

However, Aislynn knew she couldn’t avoid this. “Um. I-I don’t know.” Aislynn stuttered softly.

“What?” Alisha said. Aislynn glared harder.

Luckily, Jaylihn saved her. “SHE SAID SHE DOESN’T KNOW!!!”

“You should be, like, an alien-elf thing,” Alvara, who was in the LARPers club and the drama club, said.

“U-um. OK,” Aislynn agreed.

“You don’t have to,” Alvara added. “It’s just a suggestion.”

“N-no. I like it,” Aislynn assured her. Aislynn had to talk some more, because Alisha kept including her and volunteering her for parts. By the end of the day, Aislynn had said far more

than she'd wanted to. For most of the afternoon, she did her homework and practiced her lines. Now that she wasn't in front of an audience (there were 10 people in the drama club but that was a lot more than Aislynn was used to), Aislynn was able to say everything so well she surprised herself.

The next meeting of the drama club was during lunch the following Wednesday. Audra ordered that they practice the play up on the stage. Aislynn climbed onto the stage. Luckily for her, Aislynn's first speaking line was pretty late in the play, so she had time to try to calm her nerves. Still, when it got to her part, she was ABSOLUTELY TERRIFIED. So terrified, she couldn't even move.

Aislynn tried to say the line, quickly and quietly, just get it over with, but her voice refused to work.

"Aislynn? You remember your line? It's OK if you don't, you can use the script," Ms. Bella said.

"Noway! I'm going on a quest that's dangerous," Aislynn said quickly and quietly. Luckily, Harmonie had the next line, and Harmonie LOVED to talk, so the second she heard a noise, she started talking. The rest of practice was like that, Aislynn's voice a barely audible whisper.

The next few practices were like that, actually. Aislynn was barely able to get a word out, and she froze for about a minute before talking every time. Before she knew it, it was the day of the performance. She was dying of fright. It was almost time for the performance.

"You look so pretty!" a voice said. Aislynn looked up and saw Alisha, Jaylihn, and...

"Audra?" Aislynn asked quietly. "Did you just say..."

"Why're you so surprised? Honestly, I wish I'd made something that looks so pretty," Audra replied. *Audra* thought Aislynn was pretty. Aislynn couldn't believe it.

"You nervous?" Audra asked. Aislynn nodded. "Don't worry! You'll be great."

"Have you seen me during practice?" Aislynn said in a small voice. "I can barely say a word. I can't do this."

"Everyone gets nervous, you know," Audra said.

"Not you," Aislynn replied.

Audra laughed. "You know, when I was in 6th grade, I was so shy, I rarely talked."

Aislynn's jaw dropped. Audra? Shy? That was crazy.

"On the day of my first performance, I was TERRIFIED," Audra continued. "But I went on stage and by the end of the play, I wasn't scared. I've found that it's better to just face your fears, 'cause more often than not, you're gonna find that it's not nearly as bad as you thought it would be."

Aislynn considered Audra's cheesy-but-inspiring words.

"OK. I'll try," Aislynn replied.

"Alright, let's get moving, people!" Audra shouted. "It's showtime."

Aislynn stepped on stage, absolutely petrified. It was time. She decided to just say the line, loud as she could. And she was *amazing*. She got through the next few lines, and it wasn't that bad. By the end of the play, she was actually having fun.

The group decided to get celebratory ice-cream after the play. The ice-cream tasted better than ever, because Aislynn had finally overcome her fear.

The end.