

The Clarinet

By

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The bamboo reed elegantly vibrated against the balsa wood mouthpiece held in place by the leather ligature, not the cold metal one; my grandmother always liked the more premium options of even the most trivial of life's choices. From upstairs I could hear the tumbling scales cascading down the body of the slender, hinted brown instrument. They tumbled down the clarinet's shaft and out of the bell and some through the exposed body – such an interesting clockwork of intermingling gears made up the keywork for the tone holes! Each one exactly in the right spot to produce the tuned harmonies with which, if you were lucky, would become a symphony of aural pleasure when paired with brethren woodwind dancing partners. But today it danced alone.

The notes tumbled from the clarinet and made their way up the stairs, a vibrato here and an arpeggio there. The pianissimo beginnings, soft and light as dew barely depressing a blade of

morning grass, grew into robust and commanding fortissimo sounds swaying like endless fields amidst the acres they occupied. The entrancing melody approached closer, and closer. It tapped me on the shoulder and beckoned my full attention, inducing a slight turn of my head to catch the tune at just the right attentive angle. The sound entered my head space and filled me with reminiscent joy, a sweet memory of the clarinet's enchanting power over all within reach of its melodious touch.

“Grandfather,” I said, “who was that playing grandmother’s old clarinet this morning? It reminded me so much of her, it was so lovely.”

“Child – don’t be silly,” he dismissed my inquiry. “You well know she was buried with it.”