



The Ballad of Stage Fright Sue

This is the story of Stage Fright Sue
This fearful tale could happen to you
This story is not for the faint of heart
Listen close, for it's about to start

Stage Fright Sue was your average girl
She liked puppies, and candy, and loved to twirl
After school she played kickball, and she played to win
But few know that Sue also played violin

Lessons were on Mondays after dinner and chores
Practice was required and was such a bore
She didn't like practicing, so she didn't do it
Instead she'd pick a song, and just play through it

But at her lesson on the 8th of May
Sue's teacher announced the spring recital day
"Pick a piece that you love, in a month's time you shall go
on stage to perform for the All Studio Show!"

Well there was only one piece that Sue ever loved
And that was her newest piece, by far and above
It was faster, higher, louder, impressive
Sue said she'd perform it, even though the challenge was excessive

Her teacher was skeptical, "Is this piece your best choice?"
Sue said, "Why yes, it represents my inner most musical voice."
"Okay, but you must practice hard for this goal."
Sue said, "I'll practice with heart, and I'll practice with soul."

It must be said that herein lies the beginning of trouble
For Sue practiced each day as if in a bubble
When passages came up that Sue could not play
She simply skipped them or thought them and went on her way

Did Sue practice with heart and with soul each day?
Yes, but this story would be incomplete if I did not say
That although Sue practiced again and again
She neglected to practice with the use of her brain

Alas, the recital date was here and Sue donned her new dress
Sue's family mobilized under great duress
At the party, don't eat the cookies- they've been on the floor
It's a wonder that family ever made it out the front door!

Sue stood in line to be tuned at the great recital hall
Which is exactly the moment she began to feel small
Everything was different, the cameras, sounds and the lights
Someone was warming up on her piece, oh no, not tonight!

Sue picked up her instrument but forgot how to start
Her fingers could not navigate that really hard part
It sounded great at home, but now nothing was working
She couldn't possibly perform, even her bow arm was jerking

Desperate, Sue looked for her teacher to talk
But when she approached he was so busy he balked
She said, "I can't play!" He said, "Yes you can!"
And with that the lights dimmed and the concert began

Sue did not know when it was her time to play
She began to sweat, she began to sway
Just when she thought she'd prefer passing out
Her name was announced with a clap and a shout

Sue stood up, this was it, her turn, it was fatefully here
Sue could barely walk straight to the sound of those cheers
She got up on stage, stared out, then bit her lip
Then through the silence she spoke. She said, "I can't do it"

Sue sprinted off stage headed for the reception table
She dove underneath, so graceful, so able
Safe below with that swirl tablecloth blocking the view
A nickname was born- it was Stage Fright Sue

The hall was silent, then murmurs began rumbling
"The show must go on," said her teacher, fumbling
He called the next student and announced a restart
Stage Fright Sue heard it all from below a la cart

With rules of convention, of staying calm and seated
No one rescued poor Sue, table bound and overheated
It's just as well. Moments in life don't last
The concert ended, the party started, and the event moved into the past

I must clarify, the event moved to the past for the grown ups
But for kids it was as fresh as the squish in the donuts
One by one they came to visit poor Sue in her nest
Below the cheese and the crackers and all of the rest

The kids crawled under those tabletop treats
To see if Sue was breathing and still alive underneath
Once they confirmed her limbs intact
They played games, and took turns running topside to get her a snack

Alas, the festivities ended, the families went home
Until all that was left was Sue under her dome
Her creaky old teacher got down on his knees
And asked Sue if he could join her, if she pleased

Sue's teacher crawled under, his head touched the ceiling
He was all arms and legs, he tried sitting, he tried kneeling
He said, "Sue, what happened to you up there?"
She replied, "I don't know, I guess I got scared."

"Did you practice your spots three times each day like we talked about?" Sue said, "No."
"Did you know your shapes and your phrases without a doubt?" "Well, no."
"Was your piece packaged as a gift for your listeners to share?" Sue said, "No"
Her teacher replied simply, he said, "Ohhh."

"You see I'm a terrible performer," said Sue
"The stage isn't for me, never again, it's not what I do."
"That's hardly the case," said her teacher "Hold steady,
This is simply a matter of not being ready."

"I was young once" her teacher reminisced so dearly
"No time recently" thought Sue, "Clearly."
"Sue, we all have recitals that don't go as planned
We forget, we mess up, we even crash land

But consider your audience for a moment if you will
They come to hear music for it's such a thrill
To see and experience the artist within
This is your gift Sue- you, and your violin

So chin up, move on, there will be more recitals, you'll see
Now let's get out from under this table, it's killing me
Next time prepare each step and take care
For music is magic, and it's a magic that we share"

So Stage Fright Sue and her teacher emerged
And forgive me, for here in the story I diverge
Sue did perform again but let me explain
This time she performed with heart, soul and brain

It's a long life my friends, full of learning and wonder
And yes, some events make us want to hide down under
But after the shock of it all, try again, try anew
Stage Fright Sue did it, and so can you

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