

The Recitals

¹ Mikayla and her brother Milo were twins. They were in sixth grade and did almost everything together. They were in many of the same classes at school, played soccer on the same team, and shared many of the same friends. When soccer season ended, they each wanted to try a new activity. Milo always liked music, so he decided he wanted to learn to play the guitar. Mikayla wanted to take ballet with her friend Lily. Their mom signed them up for the new activities, and both Mikayla and Milo were very excited to try something new.

² After their first classes, the twins came home even more excited than before. Milo, eager to learn how to play like a pro, was already busy practicing chords on his guitar when Mikayla burst into his room and shouted excitedly, “Guess what? I get to have a recital for ballet!”

³ Milo put down his guitar looking confused. “I don’t understand,” he said. “How can you have a recital? My guitar teacher told me I would have a recital too. Do you play guitar in ballet? Because I sure don’t dance in guitar class!”

⁴ Mikayla replied, “Recitals are for dancing!” She twirled like she learned in ballet class. “That means YOU will dance at your recital.”

⁵ “MOM!!!” Milo yelled. “I don’t want to dance at my recital!!!”

⁶ Mom poked her head into the bedroom. “What’s all this shouting about? What’s this about dancing, Milo?”

⁷ Milo explained about the recitals, and their mom smiled. “A recital is anything that you learn and then perform for an audience. It can be a musical piece, like your recital will be, Milo. Or it can be a dance, like Mikayla will do. Don’t worry, Milo. You will not have to dance at your recital.”

⁸ That was good news as far as Milo was concerned, but he still wasn’t thrilled with the idea of performing for an audience. He was imagining what his recital would be like when Mikayla said, “I will wear a beautiful costume like a real ballerina for my recital! My teacher measured us today. What will your costume look like, Milo?”

⁹ Milo looked quickly back at their mom with big, scared eyes. “Costume?!” he said.

¹⁰ Their mom laughed. “Only for ballerinas. You, sir, will wear a nice shirt and pants for your recital.”

¹¹ “Whew!” Milo said.

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## The Recitals

<sup>12</sup> Many weeks went by, and the twins practiced for their recitals whenever they could. Milo plucked at his guitar almost every day after school, and Mikayla and Lily would practice their ballet dancing in Lily's garage. Each day they got a little bit better. Before they knew it, the week of their recitals arrived. Milo's guitar recital would be on Saturday afternoon, and Mikayla's ballet recital was the same evening. The twins were very happy that they could watch each other's recitals.

<sup>13</sup> The guitar recital was at the music school, which had a little auditorium with a small stage and chairs for the audience. There were lots of other kids from the music school who were also performing that day. Milo would be the tenth student to perform. He watched the other kids play their songs one at a time, from backstage where he was waiting his turn. Some kids played piano, others played guitar like he did, and one girl played the harp! He could tell that some were beginners like he was and others had been playing their instruments for a long time. Milo noticed when someone made a mistake playing, but no one in the audience seemed to mind. The audience would clap each time a performer finished playing. This made him feel a little less nervous, but he still had butterflies in his stomach.

<sup>14</sup> When it was Milo's turn to play he walked slowly onto the stage with his guitar in hand. He perched atop the stool placed for him at center stage, and he took a deep breath. Then he played his song the best he could. It wasn't perfect, but it was good. As his fingers plucked the final notes, Mikayla sprang out of her seat clapping. "Bravo! Bravo!" she shouted. Milo grinned with a sense of relief and accomplishment and took a bow. Later he would get to clap for Mikayla, but for now *he* got to be the star.

<sup>15</sup> That evening, Milo became an audience member while Mikayla performed in her recital at the nearby high school. Instead of a small auditorium, Mikayla's recital would be in a large theater hall with a big stage draped in a heavy black curtain. According to the printed program, there were seven groups of dancers performing different routines. Mikayla's and Lily's class was listed as the first to perform.

<sup>16</sup> When the black curtain parted, revealing the stage, the ballerinas were standing there very still, with their feet turned out, heads up, and arms frozen in a graceful arc. All of the dancers wore sparkling pink tutus along with tight ballet slippers and tiaras upon their heads. Milo thought they all looked like princesses with the way the bright lights made everything sparkle like jewels. Suddenly the music began to play and the dancers started moving. They twirled, pointed their toes, and jumped gracefully, all moving together at the same time. When the dance ended, the ballerinas curtsied while the audience clapped and Milo waved enthusiastically. He was disappointed when Mikayla didn't see him waving at her, but Mom said, "The lights are too bright. She can't see anyone in the audience."

<sup>17</sup> Afterward, Milo carried the flowers their family got for Mikayla—just like real ballerinas get after a show—as they picked her up backstage. When the twins saw each other, they broke into big grins, and Milo gave Mikayla her flowers.

<sup>18</sup> "We did it! We both performed our recitals," Milo cried.

<sup>19</sup> "You were great," both twins said at the same time. They both answered, "Thanks" at the same time too. The twins laughed and hugged, happy for each other and for themselves for jobs well done.

Mikayla

Both

Milo

**Both**

**Guitar Recital**

**Ballet Recital**

