

## The Practice

My legs tremble as I walk on the stone floor. Each step leading closer to my doom. I look up in fear, bracing myself to knock on my piano teacher's door.

"Hello!" she exclaims, but I knew she was just pretending to be joyful. Under the happy voice, clean house, bob hair cut, and glasses, she was a devil in disguise. I responded with a simple "Hi," and quickly scrambled to grab my piano book inside my book bag. As I walked through the living room and into my jail cell, I clenched my book tightly against my chest. In the cell lay the grand piano and my fate. I sat myself on the hard wooden chair, my book on the stand, and prayed for the best. My fingers shook uncontrollably as I pressed down to play the first note. Ten bars in and I already made a mistake.

"No! No! No!" as my teacher screams, "Did you even practice?"

"Yes," I replied hesitantly and slowly continued playing. My fingers were dancing on the keys, hoping that I wouldn't play the wrong note again. My teacher mumbles, "That's fine, you pass." The corners of my mouth cannot retain my excitement. I am safe for another week. Flipping to the next page, I saw pain. All those notes jumbled together were not comprehensible. Surprisingly, she was calm enough to slowly introduce me to the piece I was playing. Five bars in, no mistake. Fifteen bars in, no mistake, however, on the last note, my finger decided to betray me. Frozen in fear, I slowly glanced up at her, waiting for her harsh words to sting me, but she stayed silent. My eyes peeked over at the clock, and was so excited to see that my time was up.

"Time to go," my piano teacher exclaims.

I quickly grabbed my book, stuffing it into my book bag, and sprinted to the front door. I thanked my teacher as she opened the door to let me go. As soon as I saw the door close I happily ran over to my mom and shouted, "I'm free!"

**Haley Leung**