



# THE LAST REQUIEM

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The red velvet curtain goes up exactly at 15 minutes past 7.

Peter double-checks his cape, his hat, and his baton one last time before entering the stage. The musicians are already in position. Loud cheers engulf the audience as soon as he enters. Peter turns to the audience and takes two bows as gracefully as possible. One to the left, and one to the right. He looks at the yellow lights above his head and notices the terracotta on the beige coloured convex ceiling. This would be Peter's final requiem, his last stand.

He listens to the buzzing of the thousand enthusiasts sitting in this royal auditorium. He tightens his grip on the baton, gets on the red podium and turns to the musicians. Looking at the sixty musicians waiting for him to move his wand, Peter whispers to himself, "Here we go, maestro."

The crowd quiets down as soon as Peter raises his hand signalling the musicians to get ready. He looks

at the cellists and moves the baton on his right hand, tracing a right angled triangle in the air. An upbeat music at a low scale begins at his command. The audience can clearly hear the different notes and tempos among the fourteen cellists. The bass creates a low, hollow sound resonating with the listeners' bodies. Peter's left hand cues the pianist to the left and a sad melody begins, stirring the insides of the remaining musicians. Peter's cape moves in the air, making his body feel as light as a flightless bird. His mind was now lost in the strings, the woodwinds and the percussion, and he knew, in no time, he would defy gravity.

Slowly, the harp, the violins and the drums start playing. A tension arises in the whole auditorium as the tempo fastens. Peter clicks his wrists and sways his baton until the music takes a darker and faster form. The thousand listeners sit on the grip of their seats, with their dilated pupils and their hollow, anxious hearts in which the beats of the bass drum vibrate like an unstable tuning fork. Peter's hat falls off

his head as he cues the cymbals, the snare drum and the three clarinets. His golden tousled hair shines in the dimmed spotlights. The tempo speeds up once again as he moves his black baton. As soon as the whole orchestra of sixty starts playing in unison, Peter lifts off the red podium and floats in thin air, as the requiem for a dream keeps on playing; stirring pain, darkness and a beautiful melancholy within each listener.

The audience silently gasps at a floating Peter. The crispness of his black cape transitions into a slur, almost like a perfectly smooth legato. Peter looks up at the lights, now much closer to him and squints until his eyes get used to the intensity. His hands don't stop for a minute as all of this happens. His slender, lanky fingers and his baton instruct the musicians to inexorably increase the tempo. The audience stares with eyes wide open; their pulses now in pace with the orchestra beat. Their dreams have been buried deep within the notes of the requiem, their hearts have been

grieved.

By the time Peter ascends high enough to touch the terra cotta patterns with his fingers, the violinists close their eyes and the cymbals come to a rest. The orchestra was now ready to play the end note. Like Icarus's wings of wax being melt in the sun, Peter feels his cape melting under the intense spotlights. The lights had burnt one corner of his baton as he swirled it to cue the end note. It was time to come down now. It was time to end the funeral for a dream.

The requiem ends just as it had begun, with the cellists being the last to finish.

A silent clamour uproars in the audience as Peter stands upright on his red podium. Putting his hat back on, he turns to the audience and takes two bows as gracefully as possible. One to the left, and one to the right.

*Mashiat Lamisa is often seen frowning at the sight of people who dislike poetry and tomatoes. She can be reached at [mashiatlamisa@outlook.com](mailto:mashiatlamisa@outlook.com)*