

FLUTE FANTASTIC

By Jerry Rabushka

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As the monologue opens, ROXETTE is noting her obsession with the flute.

Flute. Flute music. Flute lessons. Flute choir, flute recital, flute contest. Essentially, flute fanatic.

That was my life. Texting, fashion, and flute. There were three of us county-wide who were the best of the bunch: (*how SHE says their names lets us know what SHE thinks of these people*) Roxette Putnam, or in other words, me... plus Kayla Hodgerson and Harrison Benjamin Cleveland.

There was a community symphony orchestra... you know, like when someone hasn't played cello in 30 years but he has it in the closet so suddenly... (*like a late night TV ad*) "yes, you too can play the cello!" Well you *can't*, but you *do*, so there, in essence, was the backbone of the community symphony orchestra.

They wanted to do the Mozart Flute Concerto in D with a contest-winning student musician, and after a county-wide process of elimination not unlike Miss Teen USA, it was down to Roxette Putnam, Kayla Hodgerson, and Harrison Benjamin Cleveland.

Well Kayla... she wasn't really "flute." She's more of (*sounding very wealthy and spoiled*) "Oh ya, practice? What practice? All suburban, youth orchestra, I'll probably work in cosmetics at Macy's and join the Chicago Symphony as a night job."

Harrison... Do you know what it's like growing up as "the boy who plays flute?" He was beaten, belittled, chased, and even had his flute whipped into a pie until he turned into the meanest, toughest, (*SHE gets more into him as SHE continues*) roughest, hunkiest, handsomest guy in the county!

He was tough enough to play a baroque concerto with a string orchestra accompaniment at a school assembly. Every girl wanted to go out with him—every girl but me, because in my world he was an insect I needed to squash on my way to center stage. He was in my way between another boring evening on Facebook—(*pretending to read a*

Facebook entry) “look, Linda just had roast beef and is tired!” —or an evening playing the Mozart Concerto in D to a crowd of at least... 25!

But, putting a jock boy behind a flute might just fill the auditorium full of people who forget that music is for *listening*. Instead it turns into, “ooh, the flute player has a Sturgis tattoo yet he plays Mozart— what an uplifting juxtaposition of the brutish with the sensitive ...” while the female contingent of the orchestra swishes around him like hip-hop models around a wrestling ring.

There are a few different types of people in the world of classical music. There’s the normal person — the “happens to like classical music” person who has to hide it because everyone else in the class thinks liking Mozart and Beethoven is grounds for stealing your lunch money, verbal abuse, and social ostracism... thanks Coach!

Then there’s Snoop-Snobby-Snob. (*sounding really upper crust and arrogant*) “Pardon me, but I think you missed the Db in the adagio. The Db that I have loved for years – the Db that gives the piece its special winsome character. I grew up with that Db, yet due to your egregious and intentional oversight, I’ll have to seriously reconsider my substantial donation for your next season.”

(*As a symphony board member, begging*) “Oh please, Mr. Patron-of-the-arts, we’ll do anything, no matter how boring, just please give us money.”

(*As arrogant patron*) “Maybe, for some front row seats. (*disdainful*) Maybe.”

And of course, there’s the really competitive type. (*picking up the pace*) “That’s not how it goes! Your tone is like a jackhammer, your rhythm is repulsive and you’re using all the expressive qualities of a freshman cheerleader! I should just play it myself so *someone* gets it right!”

(*Short pause*) Okay, that was me. My rise in the ranks was a combo of skill and ruthlessness—being better than everyone else, and reminding them of it rudely and repeatedly.

For this concerto competition, the conductor’s sense of humor mandated that they put all three of us in the same room.

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Kayla used the time to update us on her day full of drama through the magic of cell phone technology.

(As Kayla, loud, self-absorbed, and with no consideration that others are in the room) “No I will not pick up my brother from the baby sitter I am at an audition... Harold what do you mean you have plans *(outraged)* with Kathy for Saturday you know that’s our movie night... *(changing attitude)* Seventy five in a fifty, that is so cool!”

Seventy five in a fifty? That’s your *mouth*, Kalya.

Harrison Benjamin Cleveland looked at her and told her to shut her fast-flapping jawbone without actually saying a word himself. It worked. Silence.

Then *his* phone rang, but he did that “boy” thing with it. *(As Harrison, clipped and disinterested, answering various queries on the other end of the phone)* “Yep? Nope. Audition. Not my problem. Tell her I said no. It’s in the cabinet next to the soy sauce. Yep. Later.”

And me? I was going over the Mozart, in my head. I knew it like most girls know their Barbie’s wardrobe.

Quiet.

Suddenly a hurricane crashed in through the window in the form of Kayla’s mother—again via cell phone.

(As Kayla’s mother) “Kayla Marie where are you? Kayla you didn’t do any of the tasks I assigned to you when I dropped you off at the bakery this morning, Kayla did you get those cupcakes, Kayla... “ and on and on until the wind blew back the other way because this hurricane had no eye.

(As Kayla, loud and random) “Mom, I can’t pick up my sister and no I can’t go shopping and no I can’t get your Preparation H *(even louder, cutting “mom” off)* well then just stand up I don’t care look am I your daughter or your delivery service? I’m at a flute competition with Harrison and Roxette and she’s wearing this distracting... ugly... I don’t even know what it is, and no he won’t go out with me. *(“Kayla” starts to lose it)* Mom I don’t care how big his biceps are he is in my way and I will stomp him out like a small flea in a dog’s rear. Did you hear that Harrison? You’re a bug in a dog’s butt! Mom, stop it, I’m not losing my composure, I’m just fine I’m-”

(As herself, not missing a beat, shouting) Kayla shut up!

(Short pause)

Her composure might have been fine, but the rest of us needed paramedics.

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