

## ***Wonder Boy***

**By: Avaneesh S.**

THUMP! THUMP! His heart was beating as he was standing inches away from the biggest thing he was ever going to do. Sally gives him a pat on the back, but he still feels anxious. Charlie may seem ordinary, but there is so much more to his story. He currently lives in a very small apartment building with his older brother and his parents. Money has always been tight within their family, but he knows that his parents work hard to give him a good life. His father is a teacher, and his mother is a waiter at a diner. Even though both of his parents are working, the money they both make can barely pay the bills and put food on the plate. Charlie has wanted a new bike for so long since his friends all had new ones, but his parents told him that they couldn't afford it and that he had to earn the money some other way. Because of this, he goes around the neighborhood on the weekends to help around and get some money. This afternoon, he went to his neighbor Sally's house to clean their basement. This was the last thing he had to do before he would have enough money for his bike! He was stoked! Sally invited him inside, and showed him to the basement. Wow! The basement was really messy, and Charlie knew it would take him a few hours to completely clean it. Sally left, and he started slowly digging at the mess. As he was doing so, he stumbled upon a piano and a black case. He took a look inside the case and saw there was a shiny violin with his mother's photo in it. He was curious, but he ignored it and kept cleaning. He finally finished after a few hours and Sally was really pleased with his work. Before he left, he asked Sally about the violin and the piano in the basement. Sally said that before she got married, Sally played the piano and Charlie's

mother would play the violin together. They would go around doing performances at some of the largest venues in the world. One day, Charlie's mother hurt her arm before one at Carnegie Hall, and she was taken to the hospital. Doctors told her that she could never play the violin again. This shocked Charlie because his mother never told him about this. As they were talking, Sally saw in Charlie's eyes that he was capable of following in his mother's footsteps, so she asked him if he wanted to learn how to play the violin. Charlie was reluctant at first, but then agreed to come over. Charlie came over to Sally's house the next day and there it was, sitting on the table. Sally said that she fixed it up and tuned it, so they were ready to go. She showed him some violin basics, and he caught on very well. At this moment, Sally knew that teaching Charlie was a good decision. Sally offered to give Charlie violin lessons everyday after school. Charlie agreed. He was so surprised that he had this talent inside him. When he got home, he asked his mother about it and she told Charlie everything. For the next year, Charlie would come to Sally's house after finishing school to practice. Sally would play the piano and Charlie would play the violin. They would play really hard pieces, and it would still sound beautiful. Charlie became so good that he'd learned one of the hardest violin pieces ever composed. The piece was called La Campanella. One evening, Sally heard him playing and was amazed at how much progress he had made. Charlie went grocery shopping one day with his mom, and he saw a flier that said that there was a music competition in town. It said that there were many rounds in the competition and the grand prize was half a million dollars! Charlie immediately grabbed a flier and showed it to his mom. They went home and filled out the paperwork for it. He told Jenny about it the next day, and she agreed to join him. He was going to play a variety of classical pieces, and they were going to get harder and harder as the competition

progressed. The day of the first round, Charlie woke up very early and got ready. His mom drove him and Sally there in her old and tattered car. When they got there, he saw all the kids looked very entitled. He got worried a little bit, but knew he could beat everybody with his talent. His mom went into the crowd while Charlie and Sally went backstage. As he was getting ready, he saw the roster and noticed that there were more than a 100 contestants competing! For the next few rounds, the number of contestants kept decreasing. Sally accompanied him with the piano for the rounds, but in the final round, the performance had to be solo. The only people that were left were Charlie and another boy named John. John went first. Charlie couldn't pay attention to what was going on. John wrapped up, and Charlie's name was called up. THUMP! THUMP! His heart was beating as he was standing inches away from the biggest thing he was ever going to do. Sally gives him a pat on the back, but he still feels anxious! As he walked onto the stage, he thought about everything Sally had done for him. He put his violin on his shoulder and lifted his bow. He put everything he could into his playing. In the middle of his piece, he accidentally played the wrong note! He was panicking inside, but kept cool. When he was finished, the judges sat in silence for a long time, making their decision. He knew that he might lose because of the mistake. There was complete silence for a few minutes. At last the judges say together: "and the winner is, Charlie!" Charlie just couldn't believe what he heard. He had just won half a million dollars!. He ran to Sally, who hugged him very tightly. The judges called him on to the stage to present him with his jumbo check. He knew the right thing to do, and gave it to Sally. Sally told him to keep it because he earned it, and that she was just his mentor. Charlie called his dad and his brother to tell them the great news. They went home, and he was greeted with a surprise party with all of his friends and relatives. When the party

was almost over, Charlie's mom brought out a cake that was decorated with a violin on top. That night before going to bed, Charlie and his family watched the performance that came on the news. When he got into bed, he thought about the day he's had and thought about how lucky he was! In the next month, his family bought a new house and donated the rest of the money away to children in developing countries to help them get an education. To make it special, Charlie visited those countries to meet the people there. Charlie finished school and pursued a career in music, and eventually started a music school. He felt like he had never worked a day in his life, since he loved what he was doing. Everyday, he thinks about the sacrifices that the people around him made, and he is always grateful for that.

*The End!*