

## **“Stage Fright” written by Sahana Kameswar, Age 12**

The stage was set, and the curtains were closed.

The audience waited anticipantly, the performers tensely. After months of rehearsing, rehearsing, and rehearsing again, the day was finally here.

The audience believed the play would go perfectly, but they were wrong. Because deep under the stage, in the ground, something else was waiting.

The curtains opened. The audience clapped. Act I began, with everything going smoothly. But halfway through the act, a growl came from below.

People in the audience turned. “What was that sound?” they whispered. But the actors clenched their jaws and continued. Eventually, the audience returned their attention to the stage.

Then deep under, claws scraped the ground. Another growl. By now more people were concerned. But like before, they tried to ignore it.

Act I ended, and the actors left the stage with relief. They’d finished without a hitch, and just maybe there wouldn’t be any more strange sounds.

The play continued into Act II. And then...rumbling. The stage started shaking, and the actors threw out their hands for balance.

The audience gasped and screamed. “Earthquake!” someone yelled. Everyone, actors and all, ran for the door.

With a deafening BOOM, the stage split in half. A monster crashed into the open, wings flapping, tail flying, teeth glistening.

A dragon was on the stage.

People were in a mix between terror and awe. To some, dragons and earthquakes were the same thing. To others, this was the chance of a lifetime. Some even pulled out phones and cameras.

The dragon roared, someone dropped their phone, and then everyone was running as fast as they could.

Five minutes later, the dragon was the only sign of life in the theater. She let out another roar, curled her tail around herself, and fell asleep.

The stage was hers again.