

Boys, Quest

Vol. 11 No. 5 – Feb/Mar '06
\$4.95 U.S. / \$7.07 CAN.



"For you," I say, sketching a violin body, neck, and scroll. He just tapes the picture next to my old drawings and says, "Every time I see it, I'm hitting a home run on the inside."

I think I'll have to try another way to get my message to him. "Time to go," I say, pointing at my watch. I kiss Grandpa's scratchy cheek.

The next day, I bring my violin and sheet music to Grandpa's. Maybe he'll recognize the music if he sees it.

"Play for us," says Grandpa.

I do.

"It sounds good," Grandpa says, watching my fingers.

"You always say that. Look." I point to the music.

"I can't read without my glasses," Grandpa says. I hand him his wire glasses.

"Minuet by Bach," he reads.

"For you," I say pointing to him.

"I played it when I was young too," he says.

I know he misunderstands. He hands me two cookies.

"Eat," he says. "Violinists get hungry."

I take a bite and watch Grandpa put his glasses on top of today's mail.

"I like to hear you play," he says.

"How can you hear me?" I ask, pointing to my ears.

"I hear you," he answers, "and I'm hitting a home run on the inside."

I want to yell, "No!" but I stop myself.

"He hears you in his own way," Aunt says.

I think it's impossible.

As I leave, I wave at Grandpa. He looks up from reading his mail to wave back.

I walk home and picture Grandpa reading his mail in the silent kitchen. "Reading his mail! That's it!" I say to myself. I run into the house. I get paper and pencil. I write:

Dear Grandpa,

I know you like reading mail, so I'm writing you this letter. When you come to my recital on Sunday, I'll be playing Bach's Minuet especially for you. I wanted you to know.

Love,
Your grandson

I mail the letter. I imagine Grandpa reading it. I hope he isn't angry with me for writing.

On Saturday, I practice for the recital. In the afternoon our mail comes. There's an envelope with my name on it. I open it and unfold the single sheet. I read:

Dear Grandson,

You play violin, draw pictures, and write good letters. Imagine you playing the Bach Minuet just for me! I'll be in the front row listening with my heart. That's the way I always hear you play.

Love,
Grandpa

"Listening with his heart, so that's how he hears me," I say to myself. I laugh out loud, and suddenly, I'm hitting a home run on the inside.

