

Donald wiped his damp palms on the legs of his pants to dry them as he struggled to settle his nervousness. He took a deep breath and squeezed his eyes tightly shut, concentrating on remembering exactly what he had planned to play. He had been rehearsing for days, and he knew deep inside that he was ready, but that didn't help him feel any better prepared as the moment of truth crept towards him. He felt his heart begin to race even faster as the performer before him finished her song on stage. It was almost time for him to go on.

His grandfather squeezed his shoulder tightly to give him courage and smiled as he handed him his instrument. "You'll be fine," he whispered, "I know you will!" Donald shuffled forward until he was on stage, clutching his guitar in one hand as he adjusted the microphone with the other. Despite his nerves, Donald was aware enough of his surroundings to be relieved that the spotlight on stage made it almost impossible to see anyone's face out in the audience. In fact, if it weren't for the low hum of excitement coming from the darkness in front of the stage, he could almost convince himself that he was alone, simply rehearsing.

When the director of the talent show had finished introducing him, Donald smiled a nervous smile and strummed his fingers over the strings. As the first notes of the song he had been rehearsing so much rang out, he felt his courage build. Soon, he had lost himself in the joy of the moment, and he let the music slide from his fingers and the song echo out from deep in his chest. By the time he had finished his song, Donald was no longer frightened; instead, he was thrilled because he was officially a musician.