

# Disaster in F-Flat

## MY PERFORMANCE WENT FROM BAD TO WORSE AS I DISCOVERED THE TRUTH ABOUT LIES.

BY HELEN LEE

ILLUSTRATED BY ROB COLLINET

**M**r. Bowman, my violin teacher, did the cruelest thing he could ever do to me. I could tell by the look on his face that he wasn't happy with my performance. I wish he had yelled at me and told me never to come back. Instead he peered at me through his thick glasses and refused to let me pass the song and move on to the next one in my book.

Now I was in big trouble. How in the world was I going to explain this to Mom? If she

found out that I had to practice the same song again, she'd probably lock me up in my room forever and force me to practice the violin day and night. I had to come up with something good.

As I neared the house, I devised a plan that would at least give me more time to think. I would drop off my violin in my room and sneak back out of the house.

I held my breath as I quietly opened the front door and slipped inside. No one was in





## COVERING UP

The following day I turned my Suzuki book to song number 10 and started practicing. But before I reached the end of the first line, I realized that Mom would ask why I was still working on last week's song! I quickly flipped the page and tackled the new song, congratulating myself for my quick thinking.

By the end of the week I had song number 11 polished and was ready to perform at Carnegie Hall. The only problem was that Mr. Bowman didn't want to hear song number 11. He wanted me to play song number 10. And since I hadn't touched the song all week, my lesson was a total disaster. Once again my violin teacher did the unthinkable and refused to pass me. But this time I took control of the situation.

"Of course I passed," I told Mom with a smile, whisking past her and on up to my room.

So all that week I practiced song number 12 instead of song number 10. One lie led to another, and I found myself practicing a new song every week while my violin lessons were going from bad to worse. Song number 10 just wasn't going anywhere, and Mr.

sight. Carefully I tiptoed across the living room.

"Helen, is that you?" my mom called from the kitchen. *Busted!*

"Yes, I'm back," I answered, making a mad dash in the direction of my room.

"How was your lesson?" she continued. "Did you pass?"

"Uh—" My mind raced frantically through all the excuses I had been rehearsing in my mind and came up with nothing—except "Uh, yeah, of course."

As I ran outside to play, a small voice whispered in my head, *You know it's wrong to lie.*

But I quickly pushed the thought away. After all, it was just a little white lie. No harm done. Who would ever know?

Bowman kept refusing to let me pass. I was beginning to wonder if I'd ever get back on track.

One day as I was getting ready to go to my violin lesson, my mom opened the hall closet and took out her coat. Warning lights instantly went off in my head.

"Uh, Mom, where are you going?" I asked.

"To hear you play."

There was nothing I could do but pick up my violin and follow my mom out the door. My head started to throb, and the knot in my stomach grew tighter and tighter as we got closer to Mr. Bowman's house.

I had two options. I could confess to Mom and tell her the truth, or I could hope and pray that for some odd reason Mr. Bowman would ask me to play song number 15 instead of song number 10.

I decided to go with option number two, trying to convince myself that it wasn't a totally hopeless case. In the past, sometimes if I played a song really well the first time


around, Mr. Bowman would have me try the next piece. And if I did that one really well, I could go on to the next one.

Mom would think that Mr. Bowman was just reviewing some of the old songs before actually getting to the real one! Five songs was a long shot, but maybe Mr. Bowman would be in a *really* good mood.

My glimmer of hope quickly faded away with the first squeaks of song number 10. And needless to say, Mr. Bowman and my mom weren't very thrilled.



The awful wailing noises that filled our house that evening didn't come from my violin. But despite the pain, I was relieved that my mountain of lies had come crashing down.

I learned the hard way that "he whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble" (Proverbs 17:20). The best approach: simply tell the truth. 



Words in the English language that are no longer used are deleted from the dictionary. Words that used to be in our dictionary include "flesh-spades" (fingernails), "lip-clap" (kiss), and "lubber-wort" (junk food). — *Macmillan Book of Fascinating Facts*