

Silent night

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The night was silent. The half moon gazed down benevolently on the city, alone in a starless stretch of black sky. The streets were empty, and all that reached out into the shadowy darkness were the street lamps, placed so methodically and evenly it made them seem more significant than they really were. Near one of these lamps, on a bench, was an ancient man, his hair grey, his face was warped with deep wrinkles, a pair of round rimmed spectacles perched on his nose. His dull eyes, seeming to be staring into nothingness, peered sadly through the lenses.

He slowly unlatched the case on his lap and reverently lifted the saxophone from its place, and as it opened, the weak yet mystifying golden glow emerged from it, only visible from the slight glimmer of the street lamps. The man pressed the mouth piece to his lips, and in a moment, music filled the night. The smooth, deep resonating tones of the saxophone echoed through the stillness. Its strong voice sang a melancholic requiem. The instrument was singing of times long past, of memories half forgotten, love once had, life at its peak and decline.

The sounds resonated through the empty streets, reaching out in vain. The man stood as the song reached the climax, and as he did, the emotions that were resonating so beautifully seemed only to be amplified, this was pure expression from the soul; unprepared, and unrestrained. The man closed his eyes and arched backwards as the saxophone bellowed its elegy. Untainted emotions, pure and true, resounded from the notes, a defiant dirge amidst the sadness and grief of loss and solitude. Then the night was silent again.

His performance was applauded by the silence and the dark, and it was deafening. The elderly man breathed heavily, perspiration dampening his

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dull grey hair. He fell back on the bench and before long, began absently polishing the saxophone. His audience, the darkness, seemed to evaporate into the night, and he was left more alone than before. He heaved a sigh and reached for the case. Suddenly, sound had blessed the night. The rich sound of a saxophone reverberated from the darkness. The man started and rose from the bench, the rich melody wafting towards him like an old friend.

He twisted and swivelled, his eyes brightened as he searched for the player. By a street lamp, was a silhouette of a person with a saxophone, the musician sitting by the lamp, not close enough to be illuminated and not far enough to be hidden, but there was no reason for the mysterious figure to be identified. The man immediately recognised the musician's skill, but there was a sense of incompleteness in the tune, and although the tune itself sounded familiar, but he couldn't recognise it.

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It was when the piece reached the first chorus that he finally did, and understood. He smiled warmly, his eyes glittered, and he raised his mouthpiece to his lips again. He accepted the invitation, and the music was complete. It was a song of fulfilment, contentment, of joy and harmony, the instruments' eulogy of shared emotion and elation. The man revelled in the performance, and he knew silence would not meet him at the end of this one. The rich voices of the saxophones intertwined and coalesced. It was a glorious anthem that purged the night of silence.