

My best beauty pageant

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As soon as the host, Jason “ The Local Celebrity” Jacobsen, introduced me to the crowd as a wonderfully gifted dancer I thought I was in trouble and had made a mistake because my specialty performance was singing, not dancing! I could feel the rush of blood drain from my head and I became so light-headed that I had to lean against the backstage railing that was leading up to the stage behind the velvet curtains. I could feel the cold sweat beginning to condense on my forehead. I remember thinking, “ Oh no!

My make-up is going to smear! ” My mom later told me that my eyes were as big as apples when I shot a glance at her right after he said that I would be dancing for my special talent section. I nervously walked out onstage with my hands shaking and sheepishly walked up to Jason to whisper to him in his ear, “ Sorry Jason, but I like to sing more than I like to dance so I’m going to sing, O. K.? ” He smelled like expensive cologne and his hair had way too much gel in it. I thought he was going to throw me out of the pageant!

Thankfully he handled it like the good host he was and then he apologized to the crowd for his “ egregious” error and then he excitedly announced to the crowd, “ We are in for a huge surprise, we are going to be serenaded by song instead of dance, enjoy! ” He looked back at me with a huge, fake smile and delivered the tried and true line, “ Alright, the stage is yours, take it away! ” It almost felt like I was in a cheesy teenaged Disney movie. As soon as the lights dimmed and the crowd settled in I knew I was going to be great.

I composed myself, took a few deep breaths and waited for the song to begin. After all, I had practiced! Believe! Can Fly by R. Kelly hundreds of times before. Of course it was going to be great. Right? I remembered the first time I heard the song at the end of the movie Space Jam with Michael

Jordan and I immediately fell in love with the song because of the hope it inspires. I remembered singing it to my parents at the dinner table the night before the pageant and them standing up and cheering for me after I had finished.

Most of all, I remembered waking up in the morning and immediately posing in front of my bedroom mirror, comb/mic in hand, and belting out I Believe I Can Fly before I hopped in the shower and to sing it some more. If you want to know the truth, I don't even remember singing in the pageant. As soon as it had begun, it was over. All those flashbacks must have occurred while I was on stage. The next thing I knew the crowd was on their feet and clapping and cheering. For me! I couldn't believe it.

Jason Jacobsen came out from backstage and gave me a wonderful hug and I smelled his god-awful cologne again and then the next instant I was back in the dressing room sitting in disbelief staring at myself in the mirror. I had no clue if I even sang the right words but all I can tell you is that was the greatest feeling I've ever had in my whole entire life! It didn't even matter to me whether I won or not, I had fulfilled my dream of performing my favorite song in front of an audience of strangers, and apparently they even liked it. Who could ask for more? I was really flying...