

SECOND FIDDLE

ELT GRADED READER: INTERMEDIATE



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THREE VEE LIMITED

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Three Vee ELT

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INTRODUCTION

Second Fiddle is an English Language Teaching Graded Reader.

It is graded structurally and lexically:

Structures: Intermediate level

Headword count: 1500 words

Number of words in main story: 7900

DICTIONARY

fiddle *n* **1** (*informal*) a violin, a viola, a cello, a bass fiddle (double bass)
2 (*British slang*) a thing done dishonestly; *tax fiddles; to be on the fiddle*

fiddle *v* **1** touch something in a nervous way *He fiddled with his hat while the police officer asked him questions* **2** to change data, numbers or records, because someone wants to get money, *cheating. They fiddled their expenses. They asked their company for more money than they had spent.*

play second fiddle to be treated as less important than another person: *I don't want to play second fiddle anymore. I want to be the boss!*

second violin / second fiddle music parts in an orchestra have both *first violin* parts and *second violin parts*. The second violin parts are often easier.

OVERTURE



I was sitting right next to him ...'

'They'll have to stop the tour now, we can't go on...'

'It was so sudden ...'

'The paramedics saved his life ...'

'He's seventy-six, he's wonderful for his age ...'

'It was his second heart attack, you know. He shouldn't be conducting an orchestra at his age...'

'I heard him falling before I saw him ...'

'It was awful! He just collapsed and fell ...'

'It's so strange. It was just at the start of Beethoven's 5th ...'

'What I want to know is this. What's going to happen to us now...?'

Nobody had wanted to go back to the hotel after it happened. The whole orchestra was still in the dressing room behind the stage in the concert hall. They couldn't talk about anything else, although it was two hours since their concert had been interrupted so suddenly. The

hall was empty now, but nobody had started packing up the instruments. Charles Granger, the tour manager, had gone to the hospital with Leonard. They had been friends for thirty years.

Leonard Dubois was like a father to the orchestra. He had started the Wessex Symphony Orchestra twenty years ago. He had been the principal conductor, and he had seen the orchestra grow from a small town English orchestra into one of the best in the world. He had helped young musicians, and he had been a friend to everyone. There were nearly eighty people in the room, and they all loved Leonard. It had happened during the second half of their concert in Cape Town, on their first visit to South Africa. They had just started playing Beethoven's 5th Symphony when Leonard collapsed.

There had been a message from Charles. The doctors had said that Leonard would live. But everyone was worried about the rest of the tour. They had arranged several weeks of concerts across South Africa, and then on to Asia. The orchestra needed the money.

Sophie sat quietly in a corner. She had only been with the orchestra for three months, and she was the youngest musician in it. She was thinking about Leonard. He was so kind. Paul came over and sat down next to her. Paul was the leader of the orchestra, and at twenty-six years old he was already a famous violinist.

'Come on, Sophie,' he said, 'We can't help Leonard now. You should go back to the hotel. You look tired.'

'Yes, you're probably right,' she replied, 'I'll go and get my cello.'

Paul laughed. Sophie always travelled with her cello. She wouldn't put it in the truck with the other instruments. She wouldn't let anyone carry it for her. Some of the violinists had instruments worth

tens of thousands of pounds, and violins are small, so they carried them with them. But cellos are larger. Sophie's cello wasn't expensive or unusual, but it had belonged to her father. Her father had been a concert cellist, too. He had died when she was twelve, and he had left her the cello. He hadn't left much money, and her mother had worked hard so that Sophie could go to music college.

Sophie started putting her music away. Paul was going round the room, talking quietly to the musicians. Some of them began to leave.

'How are we going back to the hotel?' said Sophie. Mike, their instrument manager, had gone to the hospital too. Mike always arranged the buses for them.

'Come with us,' said Anna, 'We're getting a taxi.'

Anna played the double bass. She was a large, friendly woman in her forties. Sophie liked her. Anna was always smiling and joking. She wasn't a wonderful bass player, but as Leonard always said, she kept the orchestra happy. When things were difficult, when people were tired, Anna was always there with an amusing story, or a smile or a joke. She wasn't smiling tonight. Her eyes were red, and she looked sad and worried.

'Do you know something, Sophie,' she said, 'I'll never be able to play the 5th symphony again. I don't think I'll listen to it either.'

Sophie looked at her carefully. This time, Anna wasn't joking.

'I know what you mean,' said Sophie, 'I really know what you mean.'

FIRST MOVEMENT



They all met at the hotel after breakfast. Charles Granger came slowly into the room, and sat down. He looked much older than he had the day before. He had been at the hospital all night, and he hadn't slept. Everybody waited. Charles spoke quietly.

'Leonard's going to be all right,' he said, 'I've spoken to him already this morning. He doesn't want you to worry about him. Of course, he can't continue with the tour.'

The musicians looked at each other. What was going to happen to them?

'But the tour must go on. I've been on the telephone for two hours. We need a famous conductor. As you can guess, it's very difficult to get someone quickly. Paul will conduct Monday's concert here.'

Sophie looked round the room. The younger musicians were smiling. The older ones weren't so happy. They thought Paul was too young.

Derek, one of the other cellists raised his hand, 'Paul can't conduct the orchestra, and play the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto, surely.'

'Of course not,' said Charles, 'But that's not part of Monday's programme. And of course that will only be for Monday. I've already

spoken to Erich Van Hubert and I've arranged everything. He has agreed to join you for the rest of the tour, and ...'

Anna spoke first, 'Charles, you said "you." Don't you mean "us"?'

'No,' said Charles, 'I mean "you". I won't be coming with you on the rest of the tour. I'm going back to England with Leonard. Van Hubert will be bringing his own tour manager. He always works with Victor Parker from the New Jersey Symphony. Always. The strange thing is, they're already here in South Africa. They're in Johannesburg. Van Hubert heard the news and contacted us. We're very lucky. They'll travel to meet you in Port Elizabeth on Tuesday evening. There'll be a day for rehearsals, and then Van Hubert will conduct Wednesday night's concert. I'm sorry, I can't give you any more information at the moment. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to telephone the concert halls in Port Elizabeth and Durban. We need to replace the Beethoven. We really can't perform it.'

There were nods all around the room. Everyone agreed with him.

'But can't you join us later in the tour?' said Paul.

'No, I'm sorry,' said Charles, 'You see, I worked with Van Hubert many years ago in America. We didn't work well together. He's very different to Leonard, as you will find out. But he's a good conductor. One of the best.'

'But Charles,' said Paul, 'We need you ...'

'I didn't want to tell you this, Paul,' said Charles, 'I don't want there to be any problems with Van Hubert, but he said he would only conduct the orchestra if he could bring his own tour manager. He said he would not work with me.'

'Then tell him not to come,' said Anna, 'Paul can conduct. We want you.'

'Anna,' said Charles, 'You must understand. The concert halls want to sell tickets. We must have a famous conductor.'

'Van Hubert hasn't done anything interesting for years,' said Anna, 'He was famous twenty years ago, but ...'

'Anna, I'm sorry, but it's only for a few weeks. Then we'll all be

back in England. Leonard has agreed with me that it's the best thing to do. I don't want to worry him when he's so ill. Please, everybody, try to work with Van Hubert. It's the only answer.'



Sophie saw Anna sitting in the restaurant at lunchtime. She went to the buffet and got some food, then walked over to Anna's table. Anna's eyes were red.

'Are you OK, Anna?' she said, 'Have you been crying?'

Anna nodded.

'I'm sure Leonard will be OK.'

'It's not Leonard. I was just reading the newspaper ... look.'

She showed Sophie the newspaper, '668 rhinos killed in South Africa in last year,' she said, 'Look at the picture.'

There was a large colour photograph of a dead rhinoceros with no horn.

'That's horrible,' said Sophie, 'But why?'

'Poachers kill them for the horns. They use them in medicine in Asia. Rhino horn is worth \$50,000 a kilo. A lot of it goes to Vietnam.'

Sophie read the story quickly, 'The South African police have arrested more than 250 poachers. So they're doing something about it.'

'They are trying to stop it here,' said Anna, 'But it's all over Africa. 35,000 elephants are killed every year too, for their ivory. How can people do that?'

They were joined by Edward Sharp, who played the trombone. He had been with the orchestra from the beginning.

'Good morning, Anna, good morning, Sophie,' he said.

'Hi, Edward,' said Sophie.

'You both look very sad,' he said, 'I'm sure Leonard will be fine.'

'It wasn't that,' said Sophie, 'We've been reading about rhinos and elephants in the newspaper. There's a story about ...'

'Oh, yes. It was on the TV news. Well, we can't do anything about

ivory or rhino horn It's horrible of course, but it's not our problem. We'll have plenty to think about when Van Hubert arrives.'

'What do you think about him, Edward,' said Anna. 'I've heard so many awful stories about Van Hubert. People hate him.'

'Oh, I don't know,' said Edward. 'I've worked with him several times. He's a strange person, that's true. He always travels on his own, you know. He stays at different hotels to the orchestra, and he never speaks to anyone. He just shouts instructions at you. We used to call him General Van Hubert ... but not when he was listening, of course. He'll be all right.'

Sophie looked up, 'I've never seen him conducting,' she said, 'but I don't like his records. They all sound so ... so cold.'

'Cold?' said Edward, 'Nobody ever plays the wrong thing, that's true. Van Hubert's recordings are always perfect, you know. Really perfect. He'll do a lot of good for this orchestra. We need him.'

Edward was looking straight at Anna. Anna's face went red. She knew that she wasn't the best bassist in the world.

Sophie felt angry, 'Perfect, yes,' she said, 'perfect like a good car engine. But they're cold. There's no heart, no feeling in them.'

Edward laughed at her, 'My dear young lady,' he said, 'this is a classical orchestra, not a jazz band nor a rock 'n' roll group. Van Hubert will be a good thing for all of us, believe me.'

'But what about Charles?' said Sophie. 'I think it's terrible. Charles has been the tour manager since the orchestra began. Van Hubert...'

'Well, I like Charles, too,' said Edward, 'He's a nice man. But he isn't good enough for Van Hubert. Look what happened last night! Charles just went off to the hospital and left us all in the concert hall. We had no instrument manager, because Mike had taken Charles to the hospital. There were instruments all over the stage!'

'But Leonard had had a heart attack,' said Anna, 'What did you want him to do?'

'His job,' said Edward, 'and when Van Hubert gets here, that's what we'll all have to do!'

He looked at Anna, 'We'll have more rehearsals, too. I think we should all start practising, don't you?'

FANFARE



It was five o'clock in the afternoon when the orchestra arrived in Port Elizabeth. It had been a long and tiring day. The concert in Cape Town had been a great success. Everyone in the audience knew about Leonard's heart attack, and they had clapped Paul for fifteen minutes at the end. The reporter from the Port Elizabeth newspaper had called Paul *'an important new conductor, who has learnt his job from the best conductor of all, Leonard Dubois'*.

Even the older members of the orchestra, the ones who weren't quite sure about Paul, had been pleased and excited.

As they were getting off the bus, Paul was standing by the door.

'Don't forget,' he said, 'we're leaving in an hour. Van Hubert is expecting us at the concert hall at 6.30. We mustn't be late.'

'Well, I'm going to have a shower and I'm going to get something to eat!' said Anna.

As usual, Anna was late for the bus. Paul went to the hotel coffee shop to look for her. When he got there, the waiter was just putting a pizza in front of her.

'Come on, Anna,' said Paul, 'It's time to go.'

'Sorry, Paul,' she said. 'I thought a pizza would be ready in ten minutes. I've been waiting for half an hour. Look, why don't you go to the concert hall? I'll get a taxi. I'll only be a few minutes behind you.'



Empty concert halls always look very big and cold.

'Why did he want to meet us here?' said Sophie, 'We aren't going to have a rehearsal tonight. The hotel would be better.'

'I don't know,' said Paul, 'Anyway, let's find a seat.'

The orchestra found seats in the front few rows of the hall. The wide stage was empty, except for a small man in a black coat.

'Who's that?' whispered Sophie.

'I don't know,' said Paul, 'It must be Victor Parker, I suppose ... Van Hubert's tour manager.'

'Why hasn't he spoken to anybody?' said Sophie.

The small man walked to the centre of the stage. He waited until everybody had stopped talking.

'I'm Mr Parker,' he said, 'I want you all to listen carefully. I haven't heard much about the Wessex Symphony Orchestra ...'

'I'll lend you some CDs!' shouted someone from the back. Everyone laughed except Parker.

'Very amusing,' he said, 'But may I continue?'

There was silence.

'But I am sure that we will work well together. You are very lucky to have Mr Erich Van Hubert as your conductor for this tour. I think you will all learn a lot from him ...'

Sophie glanced at Paul. She could see that he was angry.

'So I would like you to meet ... Erich Van Hubert!'

'Wow!' whispered Paul, 'Who does he think he is? This isn't a meeting, it's a concert ...'

. . .

Van Hubert walked onto the stage, and moved to the centre.

‘Should we clap?’ whispered Sophie. Paul laughed.

They all recognised Van Hubert at once. After all, his photograph was on the front of every one of his CDs and DVDs. He was a tall, thin man in his early sixties, with very short grey hair.

‘Good evening, ladies and gentlemen,’ said Van Hubert, ‘I just want to say a few words, and give you some instructions. We will be rehearsing at nine o’clock exactly in the morning, then we ...’

‘Sorry, I’m late!’

Everybody turned round. It was Anna. She was coming into the hall.

‘It’s all right,’ she said, ‘You can begin now.’

They all laughed.

‘Who are you?’ said Van Hubert loudly, ‘This meeting began at 6.30. You are seven minutes late.’

Anna started to explain about the pizza.

‘I’m not interested in your arrangements for meals,’ said Van Hubert, ‘And I asked you what your name was.’

Anna looked surprised, ‘Anna Sikorski, bass,’ she said.

‘Well, Miss Sikorski, I’m afraid you will have to be on time in future,’ said Van Hubert, ‘But it’s all right. I will forget about this evening.’

Anna started to sit down.

‘But don’t let it happen again, Miss Sikorski.’

Sophie looked round at Anna. She knew that Anna had a quick temper and would not sit quietly.

‘You can call me, Anna,’ she said, ‘We always use first names in this orchestra.’

‘I see, Miss Sikorski,’ said Van Hubert, ‘And you can call me Mr Van Hubert. Mr Dubois is not conducting any more. So I think we’ll do things my way. Do you understand?’

PROGRAMME



*I*t wasn't a happy meeting. The rehearsals the next day were worse. Anna had a very bad day, Van Hubert found something wrong with everybody. Paul finally lost his temper when they argued over the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto in their programme. The Wessex Symphony Orchestra had recorded the concerto a year earlier, with Paul playing the violin solo. The recording was a best seller, and many of the newspapers had said that it was better than Van Hubert's famous recording of twenty years earlier. Van Hubert didn't like the way Paul was playing.

'Dubois always did this concerto much too fast,' he said, 'We'll play it my way, please.'

'Look here,' said Paul, 'people buy tickets for our concerts because they want to hear us. They've bought our records.'

'You were the conductor in Cape Town,' said Van Hubert, 'Tonight I'll be conducting. You can't play the solo and conduct, after all.'

'My recording was one of the best-selling classical records of last year,' Paul said.

'Was it? How interesting. Well, maybe someone else should play the solo, if you can't do it.'

. . .

Then there was the question of Beethoven's 5th Symphony. Charles Granger had phoned ahead and told the concert halls that they would perform the 'Sea Selection.' They had made a CD of several shorter English pieces by different composers a year earlier, and it was always a popular piece.

'You're already performing work by two English composers, Elgar and Holst. A third English piece is too much!' Van Hubert said.

'We're an English orchestra,' said Paul angrily, 'People buy tickets to see an English orchestra, so when we travel, we always play one English piece in each programme. So now it's two. And we all know it, and we've played it many times.'

'Mahler is much too difficult for this orchestra,' said Van Hubert, 'I can see that. We'll have to play this popular English rubbish.'

Van Hubert's Mahler recordings were famous.

'Rubbish!' said Paul, 'Rubbish? These are some of the greatest English composers!'

When the rehearsal finished, Anna was crying.

'Please read the music, Miss Sikorski,' Van Hubert had said, 'It was written by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, who knew much more about music than you. I think you will agree with me.'

NO HARMONY



But the Port Elizabeth concerts went well. Maybe Van Hubert was different, but he was a great conductor. The orchestra was nervous, but they were almost afraid of him. The result was good music. At the end, Parker walked on stage with the biggest bouquet of flowers Sophie had ever seen, and gave them to Van Hubert.

Anna whispered, 'He'll have a bouquet of flowers like that every night. How much do they cost? What a waste of money!'

On Friday morning the orchestra met by the buses. To everyone's surprise Van Hubert was already sitting on the first bus.

'I thought he travelled on his own,' said Anna, 'That's what Edward told us.'

'Well, he's travelling with us today,' said Sophie, 'so you'd better not sing any funny songs on the bus. I don't think he'd like it.'

Sophie got onto the bus. She was going past Van Hubert's seat when Parker stopped her.

'What are you carrying?' he said.

'My cello,' Sophie replied, 'I always take it with me.'

'There's a truck for instruments. If everybody carried their instruments, there wouldn't be any room on the bus.'

'But you see ... it's very important to me,' said Sophie quietly, 'It was my father's and ...'

'Instruments do not travel on the bus,' said Parker.

'Some of the violinists carry their instruments.'

'Violins are different. Cellos are much too big. The next thing, we'll have Ms Sikorski trying to bring her double bass on the bus.'

'Let me explain,' she said, 'I ...'

'You are wasting our time,' Van Hubert interrupted suddenly, 'Take it to the truck.'

'It's too late, Van Hubert. The truck's going.' It was Paul. He had been standing behind her during the conversation. Sophie glanced through the window. The truck was driving away.

'Well, it had better be on the truck in future,' said Parker.

Paul took Sophie's arm, 'There's a seat over there,' he said, 'Don't worry, Sophie, I'll speak to him later.'

'I know it's stupid, Paul,' she said, 'But I don't want to put it on the truck. I'm so afraid of losing it.'

'Look, I'll tell him, Sophie. Forget about it.'

The bus was much quieter than normal. People talked quietly, but there were no jokes, or songs. The musicians couldn't understand it. Leonard had always travelled with the orchestra, but they all knew that most of the great conductors didn't travel with their orchestras. They usually went by plane or car. Van Hubert never spoke to anyone except Parker.

When they stopped at a restaurant for coffee, he stayed on the bus. Parker took coffee to him. The next concerts were in Durban. Sophie had never been there, and she was looking forward to seeing the city. Paul had gone forward to speak to Van Hubert, and Anna was telling her all about Durban. Anna had been there several years earlier.

'I'll take you to a great restaurant, Sophie. It's Italian. The owner's an old friend of mine. We're free this evening. We can go then. You'll love it. It's near the beach.'

'O.K.,' said Sophie, 'We need a free evening. It's been a difficult week. It'll be nice to get away from the orchestra for a time.'

'NO!'

Sophie looked up. It was Paul. He was standing next to Van Hubert's seat, and he looked very angry. He was pointing his finger at Van Hubert's face.

'You can't do it, Van Hubert. They need time ... in two or three weeks, maybe ... but not yet!'

'Please listen,' said Van Hubert, 'And do not wave your finger at me! All the advertisements in Durban say that we'll be playing it. The tickets say we'll be playing it. The programme has been produced.'

'They'll understand! We're already playing the Sea Selection at the other concerts, and it went well in Port Elizabeth. There's no reason!'

'It will be good for the orchestra. There'll be reporters there, and television cameras.'

'You want to be on television. That's it, isn't it?'

'Please return to your seat. This conversation is over.'

Paul came back. His face had gone white, and he was shaking.

'What's the matter?' asked Anna.

'You won't believe it. He wants us to play Beethoven's 5th in Durban.'

'What? We can't ... not after Leonard collapsed like that. It's not right.' Anna was shaking too. She got up, and walked quickly forward.

'I won't play it, Van Hubert, she shouted, 'I won't play the 5th symphony.'

Van Hubert smiled. 'I'm sorry to hear that you're leaving the orchestra, Miss Sikorski,' he said, 'But we'll be able to manage without you. Thank you.'

'I didn't say I was leaving,' Anna said.

'No, but I did. Parker will get you a ticket home when we get to Durban. There are several planes a day.'

'Sit down, Anna. You're not going anywhere.' It was Paul. 'You're the conductor for this tour, Van Hubert. But when it's finished, we won't have to work with you again. I'll have to telephone Charles Granger in England. He's not on this tour, but he's still the manager of the orchestra. And Anna is employed by this orchestra. Do you understand?'

Van Hubert looked out of the window. Parker turned to Paul, 'We shouldn't talk about this in public. Perhaps you'd like to talk to me when we get to Durban?'

INTERMEZZO



They didn't play the 5th symphony in Durban. Van Hubert found that the whole orchestra was against him. They were all asked to stay in the concert hall after the first concert.

Van Hubert came onto the stage, 'That was not good enough!' he said, and when we get to Asia, we will play Beethoven's 5th. And there is a change of plan.'

Sophie and Anna glanced at each other.

Van Hubert continued, 'As you know, after the South African part of the tour, we will be travelling to Asia via Dubai. The plan was to stay in Dubai for two nights.'

Everyone was looking forward to it. They weren't playing a concert, but it was a free day.

'We have a different plan. We will change planes at Dubai. We will not leave the airport, but will go directly to our flight to Asia.'

Paul stood up, 'It's going to cost a lot of money to change the tickets. More than the hotels in Dubai. Why?'

'We need more rehearsal time. Very few classical orchestras visit South-East Asia. We must be perfect!'

. . .

Rehearsals were bad. Van Hubert seemed to hate Paul. Paul knew that he shouldn't argue with the conductor, and he tried not to have arguments. Anna was quieter than anyone. She was really frightened of losing her job. It was a bad time for Sophie because she was friends with Paul and Anna. Van Hubert got angry about every little mistake, and Sophie spent most of her free time practising.

The problem of the 5th symphony hadn't gone away. Van Hubert had recorded it several times with different orchestras, and as it was part of the Wessex Symphony's programme, he wanted them to play it. The audiences seemed happy with the Sea Selection. They all knew about Leonard, and they understood that the orchestra was unhappy with the 5th Symphony.

You can get used to anything. As the days went by with concerts in Durban and Bloemfontein, the orchestra got used to Van Hubert. Nobody liked him, but they recognized that he was a good conductor. The audiences clapped for a long time everywhere. Anyway, he didn't try to make conversation with them, and they didn't need to speak to him.



Anna and Sophie were at the back of the bus. They were travelling to Johannesburg. There were three concerts there.

'He wants to change the notes in the programmes for the concert halls in Asia now,' said Anna. 'There's only one page about him ... the same as Leonard had. He wants two pages.'

'What are they going to write about?' said Sophie. 'The notes don't tell you very much about him. They're just a long list of his recordings, that's all.'

'I was speaking to Edward last night,' said Anna, 'He told me a few things about Van Hubert. Do you know where he's from?'

'He's American, isn't he?'

'Yes, but Van Hubert isn't his real name. His name's Hubert Simpson. He changed it.'

'Why did he do that?'

'He wanted to sound European. There are so many famous German and Austrian conductors. *Erich* sounds German. *Van* sounds Dutch.'

'Well, a lot of musicians change their names. Why should it be important?' said Sophie.

'I don't know,' said Anna, 'But why do you think he agreed to work with us?'

'I haven't thought about it. I don't suppose he needs the money.'

'Ah, well, I'm not so sure about that. He's worked with more than ten orchestras in the last five years. He never stays long. Musicians don't like him.'

Sophie smiled, 'You certainly don't, do you, Anna?'

'There's something strange about him. '

'Well, I don't like him either,' said Sophie, 'but we'll be home in a few weeks. Look, we fly to Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai, then Vietnam, then Osaka and Tokyo and home. It's not too long.'

CRESCENDO



The Johannesburg concerts were another success for the orchestra. There was a party after their last concert in Pretoria, with some South African musicians who had come to see them. Sophie and Anna were talking to Solomon Hendricks, the famous South African violinist. He lived in Pretoria. They were talking about the Monday and Tuesday.

‘It’s great,’ said Sophie, ‘We’ve got two free days after Pretoria, and then we fly to Dubai. We’re not even going to change hotels’

‘You don’t need to,’ said Solomon, ‘Pretoria’s only forty kilometres away from Johannesburg airport.’

‘We can get all our clothes washed in the hotel before we fly to Asia, too,’ said Anna.

‘When are you leaving?’ said Solomon.

‘Wednesday morning.’

‘Have you been able to see Africa?’ he asked.

‘Not really. It’s all been cities and roads. I’d love to see some of the animals. Sophie and I are going to try tomorrow. We thought we could stay over in the National Park. How far is it?’

‘Five or six hours by road. An hour by air,’ said Solomon.

‘Oh. It’s further than I thought,’ said Sophie.

'Let me take you,' said Solomon, 'I've got friends who work there.'

'Thank you. That's very kind of you,' said Anna.

'Yes, thanks,' said Sophie.

'Do you think Paul would like to come with us?' said Solomon, 'We can easily take a plane, and my friends will meet us at the airport with a car.'

'Let's ask him,' said Sophie, 'I'm sure he would.'

'Uh, oh,' said Annie, 'Parker's coming over. Just as I was relaxing and enjoying myself!'

Parker walked over to them.

'Ah, Miss Henshall ...' he started.

'May I introduce Solomon Hendricks?' said Anna, 'Solomon, this is Mr Parker who ...'

Solomon smiled and put out his hand. Parker didn't take it.

'Excuse me. I'm in a hurry. Miss Henshall. I'm sorry to interrupt you. We're just putting all the instruments in the truck. We haven't got your cello.'

'No,' said Sophie, 'It's in the dressing room. I wanted to practise in the morning.'

'But the truck is leaving for the airport tomorrow, early in the morning. Would you get it for me, please?'

'I'd rather not,' said Sophie, 'I want to practise in the morning. Why do you need it now?'

'You know the rules, Miss Henshall. I'd like the cello.'

Solomon spoke, 'I'm sure you don't need it,' he said. 'Sophie has told you that she wants her cello tonight. I always take my violin everywhere with me.'

Parker turned angrily to Solomon, 'It's none of your business!' he said, 'Why don't you shut your mouth, and let me do my job?'

Everyone had stopped speaking. The room was quiet. They were all looking at Solomon and Parker. Solomon was trying to control his temper.

'Look, Parker, Solomon is our guest. You can't speak to him like that,' said Sophie.

'You will go and get the cello,' said Parker, 'Now.'

Sophie thought Solomon was going to hit him.

'All right, I'll get it, I don't want any trouble,' she said. She looked at Solomon, 'May I apologize for all of us?' she said, 'I'm very very sorry.'

'It's not your fault, Sophia. But if ever you're looking for a new orchestra, just tell me. We have a job for you in here in South Africa. Musicians who are as good as you don't need to work for someone like him.'



Parker had walked away. He was standing near the door. Sophie got her cello in its case, and gave it to him. She didn't say a word. Parker turned angrily and walked out of the room with it.

Paul came over to apologize to Solomon again. The three of them moved to a table.

'It's been like this for two weeks,' he told Solomon. 'Anyway, neither of them are at the party, so let's enjoy ourselves.'

'I saw Van Hubert,' said Solomon, 'He was leaving the concert hall in a black Rolls-Royce. I suppose he always travels around in it.'

'Not on this tour,' said Paul, 'He's been on the bus with us.'

Solomon laughed, 'Van Hubert on a bus? You're joking.'

'He's not,' said Sophie, 'He's been on the bus every day.'

'I don't believe you,' said Solomon 'I've worked with him before. He always has his own car and he always stays in different hotels to the musicians. He usually takes different flights too.'

'Not this time,' said Paul, 'I wish he was travelling on his own. Then we could relax. I'll get some drinks. What would you like?'

NOCTURNE



The hotel was near the concert hall. Sophie walked back with Paul and Anna.

'I wish I could get my cello tonight,' she said as they arrived outside the hotel.

'I wouldn't ask Parker,' said Anna, 'but why don't you ask Mike? He's got the keys to the truck You could give the cello to Mike in the morning. He'll tell you what time they're leaving with the truck.'

'Hey, where is the truck?'

Anna and Sophie looked at Paul.

'It isn't in the hotel car park,'he continued.

'You don't think ... you don't think it's been stolen?' Sophie's heart was beating fast.

'Maybe they left tonight,'said Paul.

'Why would they do that?' said Anna, 'Pretoria isn't very far from the airport. There'll be plenty of time tomorrow.'

'Plenty of time?' Sophie was thinking hard, 'Then why are they leaving so early in the morning?'

'What do you mean?' asked Anna.

'Didn't you hear Parker? He said the truck was leaving early in the morning. That's why he wanted my cello tonight!'

‘They might have decided to go tonight. It would only take an hour. Probably less,’ said Anna.

‘That isn’t what Parker said,’ replied Sophie. ‘He told me the truck was leaving early in the morning. You know Parker, everything has to be done his way. He wouldn’t have allowed Mike and Jim to leave tonight.’

Paul looked worried, ‘There’s another thing,’ he said, ‘Why are they taking it to Pretoria now, on a Sunday night? We don’t fly until Wednesday.’

‘Maybe they’re sending it on to Asia ahead of us,’ said Anna, ‘That must be it.’

They walked into the hotel. As they were getting their keys they saw Mike walking towards the lifts.

‘Mike!’ shouted Paul, ‘Just a minute!’

Mike came over, ‘Hi. Was it a good party, Paul?’

Paul took his arm, ‘Mike, where’s the truck? It isn’t outside the hotel.’

Mike smiled, ‘No,’ he said, ‘Didn’t you hear? We had a warning from the police. They’d heard about some plans for a robbery. Van Hubert was very worried about the instruments. He must have been worried about your old cello, eh, Sophie?’

‘So where is it now?’ said Paul.

‘I drove the truck to a house just outside town. A huge place, it was. Van Hubert’s having dinner there. It belongs to some friends of his. It’s got a high wall around it, and guard dogs. Van Hubert and Parker are staying there until we leave for Asia. Do you know, their driver brought me back to the hotel in a Rolls-Royce. A fantastic car, it was. It had a television in the back. I got back just before you. They said the truck would be safer there for two days.’

‘They’re not sending the instruments ahead?’ said Sophie.

‘No,’ said Mike, ‘There would be too many problems with border controls, with immigration and customs. You know, they often ask each musician to take their own instrument through customs. You remember America? It took hours in New York.’

Anna looked at Mike carefully, 'Did the police tell you about these plans for a robbery?' she said.

'No, of course not, Anna. You know me, I don't speak Afrikaans. They told Parker and Van Hubert. Haven't you noticed? They both speak Afrikaans pretty well.'

'Why were they speaking Afrikaans, anyway?' said Paul, 'All the police officers here speak English and Afrikaans.'

'Did you see the police?' Anna went on.

'No, but Parker told me all about it. I should go to bed. It's getting late and it's been a long day. Goodnight. Sleep well!'

PASTORAL



‘Let me see the photos,’ said Sophie.

Anna passed her the tablet, ‘I downloaded them onto my tablet while you were having a shower,’ she said.

Sophie touched the screen with her finger and started scrolling through the photos, ‘How many did you take?’

‘Hundreds,’ said Anna, ‘But I deleted a lot. There are still more than a hundred there.’

Sophie moved her finger and scrolled to the next photo, ‘Oh, no! When did you take that, Anna! I look awful!’

Anna laughed, ‘It was when you saw the lion. You looked so afraid. It was funny!’

‘Well, you can delete that before anyone sees it,’ said Sophie.

‘No, it’s funny. I’m not deleting it. Scroll to the next one ... it’s Paul with that silly hat on.’

It had been a wonderful day in the National Park. They had seen all of the ‘Big Five’ animals: rhinos, elephants, buffalo, lions and leopards. They were staying in the park that night, and were waiting for Paul and Solomon for dinner. Paul and Solomon had been talking about recording together.



They were relaxing after dinner.

'This is the most beautiful place,' said Sophie, 'I love it here. And thank you for an excellent dinner.'

'Yes, that was great,' said Paul, 'Thanks, Solomon. And I love your photos of all the big cats, Anna.'

Anna laughed, 'Well, those lions are leopards were a long way away.'

'The lions were too near for me!' said Sophie, 'But the sky's beautiful, the trees are beautiful and the animals are wonderful.'

Solomon frowned, 'Yes, it is a beautiful place. It's one of the largest national parks in the world. But I don't know how long it will be like this.'

'What do you mean?' said Anna.

'Poachers killed more than four hundred rhinos in this park last year. The police and soldiers try hard, but we are very close to Mozambique and Zimbabwe, and they cross over the borders before anyone can catch them. This park has a 350 kilometre border to the east with Mozambique, and more than fifty kilometres to the north with Zimbabwe. Our soldiers can't follow the poachers across the borders.'

'I was reading about that in Cape Town,' said Anna, 'The morning after Leonard's heart attack. Do you remember Sophie?'

'Yes,' said Sophie, 'It's horrible. What's going to happen?'

'We need an answer. The poachers are very poor people, and rhino horn is very expensive. Do you realize it's worth twice as much as gold in some countries? It can be worth over \$65,000 a kilo, sometimes as much as \$80,000. More than gold. More than drugs.'

They all sat quietly. They had seen so many wonderful animals that day.

Solomon drank some water, 'They're talking about farming rhino, so the price will go down. It's a possible answer. But it's the same problem with elephants. The poachers are killing them too. But poor

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farmers also have problems with elephants, because they can destroy so much. People and elephants don't live together well! Neither do people and lions and leopards.'

DUET



Sophie thought she was dreaming. She was running along a road, chasing a man. He had her cello in his hand, and a bell was ringing. Again and again.

Then she woke up. It was the telephone beside her bed. She glanced at the clock. Half past two!

'Yes?' she said as she picked up the phone.

'It's me ... Anna. I've got to talk to you.'

'Anna, do you know what time it is? It's half past two ...'

'I'll be there in two minutes.' There was a noise. Anna had put her phone down. Sophie got out of bed. She went to the bathroom and cleaned her teeth. Then she felt a little better. There was a knock on the door. It was Anna.

'Come in ... I hope this is important!'

Anna sat on the bed. 'I couldn't sleep,' she said, 'I was thinking about what Mike said in Pretoria. About border controls.'

'What about?'

'They hardly ever stop us and search us when we go from one country to another, do they?'

‘No,’ said Sophie slowly, ‘But you remember New York? We each had to carry our own instrument through customs.’

‘But that was all. They didn’t open any of the instrument cases, did they?’

‘No,’ said Sophie, ‘People like orchestras, I guess.’

Anna continued, ‘We only saw Mike by accident that night. That’s how we knew the truck had gone. They didn’t want you going to the truck in the morning with your cello, did they?’

‘Well, no, because the truck was leaving in the evening.’

‘So why did they tell us that it was leaving in the morning?’

‘Maybe they didn’t want to worry us ... about the warnings.’

Anna shook her head, ‘They were taking it to a safer place. Why would we worry about a robbery? Think, Van Hubert and Parker were already here in South Africa when we arrived. They have friends here. Very rich friends. The truck is at the friend’s house. With all our instruments in it. And it’s just a few hours from this park. And we’re going to fly to East Asia ...’

‘Which is where they buy and sell rhino horn ...’ said Sophie.

‘There’s more,’ said Anna, ‘We were going to stop in Dubai. That meant the instruments would go through border controls. But now we’re not going to stop. The instruments will just change planes. So will we. We’ll be in transit. We won’t go through customs controls.’

‘And Van Hubert decided that we wouldn’t stay there.’

‘Exactly,’ said Anna, ‘And he never travels with orchestras. But he’s been with us all the time.’

Sophie thought for a moment, ‘Didn’t Solomon say “more expensive than gold or drugs?”’

Anna nodded, ‘Are you thinking what I’m thinking?’

Sophie looked at her, ‘Yes. We have to speak to Paul and Solomon before breakfast tomorrow!’

FINALE



*T*his is Johan Senzo, from the National Park,' said Solomon, 'Can you repeat our conversation to him?'

Solomon had phoned Johan Senzo as soon as Anna had told him the story. He was with them an hour later. Solomon asked for coffee and they all sat at a table under the trees. Sophie looked at the blue African sky and thought about all those dead rhinos. Of course they had to do something.

'It's an amazing story,' Johan said when she had finished, 'It's difficult to believe. He's a rich man, a famous man, an international conductor. Why would he need the money?'

'It could be a lot of money,' said Sophie, 'There are seventy or eighty instruments in the truck. No, a lot more, if you think about the drums, and most people have two instruments. A kilo here, a kilo there ... that would be worth millions.'

'Still, seventy kilos or eighty kilos of rhino horn, or of ivory, is heavy. Would you notice if your cello case was a kilo heavier?' asked Johan.

'I don't know. When you're tired after a long flight, everything seems heavy,' said Sophie.

'Wouldn't you open your case to check it?'

'Not at the airport. But even if you did, you'd only glance quickly. Anyway, it could be inside some instruments.'

'And you don't know where this house is?' said Johan.

'Just that it's near Pretoria. But Mike would remember. He drove the truck there.'

'I have his phone number here,' said Paul.

'Maybe you could speak to him,' said Johan, 'And don't say why you need to know. Think of a reason ... maybe you have to speak to the conductor.'

'Why can't I tell him?' said Paul.

'We don't know how many people know about this. Maybe this Mike is working with them.'

No,' said Paul, 'Mike's been with the orchestra for twenty years. Longer than any of us.'

'OK,' said Johan, 'But for now, I prefer you not to tell him. Find out where the house is, and then I'll call the Pretoria police.'

'How soon can we get a plane back to Pretoria?' said Paul, 'I need to be there.'



'I'm Major Zama,' said the police officer, 'Thank you for waiting. Please sit down.'

They were in the hotel in Pretoria. Solomon had come with Paul, Anna and Sophie. They looked at the police officer. He was smiling, but they still didn't know what had happened.

'I hope we didn't waste your time, Major,' said Paul, 'Only we ...'

'Oh, not at all,' said Major Zama, 'I've come to thank you. And to tell you about it.'

'So there was rhino horn!' said Anna, 'I knew it! I never liked them!'

The major smiled again, 'Sorry, Ms. Sikorski, but in fact we didn't find any rhino horn. None at all. And no ivory either.'

Anna and Sophie looked at each other in surprise.

. . .

‘Oh ... I’m so sorry,’ started Anna.

‘We told Mr Van Hubert and Mr Parker that we were looking for rhino horn. They were very surprised and very unhappy. You see, last year Mr Van Hubert did a concert here in South Africa for “Save The Rhino.” He is very worried about rhinos and elephants himself.’

Anna’s face was red. She breathed deeply, ‘Oh, no!’

The major smiled again, ‘But of course we did look in the instrument cases. And they will be going to prison. For a very long time.’

‘But there wasn’t any rhino horn?’ said Sophie, ‘So why ...?’

‘Have you heard of blood diamonds?’ said the major, ‘Blood diamonds come from Central Africa and West Africa. They sell diamonds to get money for wars in many countries.’

‘That’s why they’re called blood diamonds, then’ said Paul.

‘Not only that. The workers who get the diamonds are prisoners. They’re slaves, actually. It’s dangerous work. Some slaves die. Many of these slaves are beaten and killed. If they can sell the diamonds, perhaps in Asia, they can use the money to buy guns here.’

‘Why can’t they just sell them?’ said Paul.

‘Here in South Africa we are trying to stop the international business in blood diamonds. It’s not allowed to export them or sell them. Your national park was part of it, actually. The diamonds come across the border into the park. Then they come here. If we check diamonds, we know where they come from. Diamonds from different places are different. So they can’t just export them. They needed to get them out of Africa secretly.’

‘In our instruments,’ said Sophie quietly.

‘Exactly,’ said the major, ‘and they’re much smaller and lighter than rhino horn.’

Anna started laughing, ‘Do you know the expression “second fiddle,” major?’

‘Yes,’ said the major, ‘Of course. It means the second section of

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violins in an orchestra, and then it also means to do a less important job than someone else.'

'It also means something against the law,' said Anna, 'So our idea was wrong about Van Hubert's first fiddle. It was his second fiddle that was the problem.'

C O D A



*P*aul conducted all three Hong Kong concerts. The story was in all the newspapers. When they came off the stage at the end of the last concert, they got a surprise. Leonard was waiting for them.

‘No, don’t worry, I’m fine ... fine,’ he said, as they crowded round him, ‘My doctors said a holiday would be good for me.’ He turned to Paul, ‘You were fantastic,’ he said, ‘the whole orchestra was fantastic. You performed very well.’

‘Why didn’t you tell us you were coming?’ said Paul.

‘I wanted it to be a little surprise, and I wanted to tell you all something myself. I’m too old for this. I’m going to retire ...’

‘Retire?’ said Anna, ‘No, you can still conduct! No one can replace you ...’

‘Most people retire when they’re sixty-five,’ said Leonard, ‘I’m seventy-six years old.’

‘Seventy-six years young,’ said Anna, and everyone laughed.

‘Thank you, Anna,’ said Leonard, ‘You are always too kind. But Paul can replace me,’ Leonard put his hand on Paul’s arm, ‘Paul will be conducting for the rest of the tour ... and, if he agrees, he’ll be the youngest principal conductor in Britain after the tour ...’

Everybody was talking at the same time ...

'It's going to be great, Paul ...'

'Hey! Paul, congratulations!'

'Leonard, sit down! Relax! You shouldn't be standing!'

'Thank you, I'm fine,' he said.

'Will it be all right to take my cello on the bus now, Paul?'

Paul looked at Sophie, 'You don't have to ask,' he said.

GLOSSARY OF WORDS OUTSIDE THE
1500 WORDS

amusing

arrange, arrangement

argument

audience

awful

border

clap

collapse

conduct (v), conductor (n)

conversation

customs

elephant

delete

drugs

finger

glance

horn

horrible

immigration

instruction v

GLOSSARY OF WORDS OUTSIDE THE 1500 WORDS

instrument
interrupt
ivory
leopard
lion
major (n)
musician
perform
poacher
principal
rehearse, rehearsal
relax
replace
retire
robbery
scroll
selection
slave
stage
suppose
tablet
temper

INTERNATIONAL WORDS

bouquet
buffalo
buffet
download
paramedic
rhino, rhinoceros
transit
via

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC WORDS

GLOSSARY OF WORDS OUTSIDE THE 1500 WORDS

bass, bassist
cello, cellist
composer
concerto
jazz
orchestra
rock 'n' roll
solo
symphony
trombone
violin, violinist

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