

Years 5 & 6  
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### The Strum of a Guitar

The rain poured down from the tumultuous sky, clouding up the window completely. The night was like a painting, beautiful and full of colour against the inky, black abyss. The sky had seemed to go from a light blue hue to a dark pitch black that seem to have suffocated the sunlight. Maria gazed out her window, then at her guitar that lay flat on the floor. She stared at it intently for a few moments and then started to edge closer to it. But she didn't have the courage to pick it up. Or even start playing it. As she closed her eyes, tears raced down her cheek like a rushing waterfall. *It is not fair!* Maria thought to herself angrily. *Why did grandmother have to leave and why now! She had to just go. I didn't even get to say goodbye.*

The thoughts rushed through Maria's head rapidly. Whenever she wanted to start playing any of her instruments, she just couldn't. Her grandmother was the most kind and loving person she had known and was never a bit mean. And without her everything just felt, weird. Without her, Maria didn't even feel like herself anymore. Her grandmother was her biggest supporter and always thought that Maria would be a successful musician, something Maria had always sought to be. Despondent of her dream, Maria felt no courage to continue her love for music. They would just remind her of her memories with her grandma and whenever she thought of them, all she could do was cry for what felt like hours. Not that she didn't want to remember them, but when she did, she felt so broken. *I wish grandmother were here. I would be able to talk to her and tell here everything that I have been feeling for the last few weeks. She would help me find a way to get over all this. But I need to figure this out myself. But how can I, alone?*

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The morning was bright and sunny, and the light of dawn seeped into the room. The sun shone through the curtains and Maria got up, heading outside. She sat down on the swinging chair, her guitar in one hand as she looked out at the sunrise. She took a deep breath to take it all in and heard the door behind her open and then slowly close. She looked back, frightened that it was some random person, but it was only her mother. Maria looked at her mum and couldn't find the words to say anything.

"Hey Maria," she said looking at her.

"Hi," Maria replied in a quiet and sniffling voice.

"Do you want to talk?" asked her mum.

"Yeah," said Maria in a faint voice.

"It hasn't been quite the same without your grandmother, has it? I can't even find the words to describe how much I miss her." Her words trailed off as her voice broke.

Tears slowly trickled down her cheeks, and Maria could feel her mother's grief.

"I know. I miss her so much. I don't have the courage to even play any of my instruments, and I feel like I have given up on my dream."

Her mother looked at her beady-eyed, and flabbergasted, as Maria was never the one to give up on her music.

"It's just that, whenever I think of playing any of my instruments I just can't. It reminds me of grandmother and how . . . how . . ." she stammered at the last words she was about to say and broke down into tears. Her mother wrapped her arms around Maria, engulfing her in a hug. Maria couldn't stop crying and then let go of her mother. Her eyes were bloodshot red, and watery while her shoulders drooped.

"I wish she were still here," said Maria in a small, sniffly voice.

"I know you do."

"But its not fair! Why did she have to leave!"

Her mother sighed and then held Maria's hand in hers. "Well, sweetie we can't really do anything about it. The universe has a plan for us, and we just have to learn to deal with it. And you can't just spend the rest of your life grieving, Maria. Yes, I know you can't help but grieve, I can't as well, but we have to learn that this is just a part of life."

Maria looked at her mother, who was wiping away the trickles of tears coming down her face, resisting the urge to cry.

"But *how* do I get over this!"

"By playing music," her mother said, looking at her. "Your grandmother used to say that music helped her get over everything, and it even helped her mourn the loss of her own parents. And it might help you get over this too, Maria," replied her mum.

Maria looked at her mother, then glimpsed at the horizon thinking about all the great times that she had spent with her grandmother. Maria could hear it in her head, the sound of her grandma talking to her, telling Maria that it was okay and to go ahead and start playing her guitar. She got up from where she was sitting and grabbed her guitar, strumming the strings and closing her eyes, listening to the chords each time they were played. As each note was played, Maria felt all the feelings that she had bottled up for the past few weeks come out of her. Playing her guitar reminded her of all the times that she had with her grandmother, the good and the bad. Her mum leaned closer to her, wrapping one arm around Maria. They both gazed over at the sunrise, filled with streaks of pink and orange. And with the strum of a guitar Maria played one last song for her grandmother, thinking that she was right there sitting next to them.

The End