

Inspired by [Pictures of Hollis Woods](#) and the [Episodic Writing Lesson](#) at the WritingFix website, this eighth grader wrote the following series of episodes to tell a story. Liam worked especially hard on his idea development and organization skills as he wrote and revised the published writing you see here.

Read this essay, and be prepared to discuss where the writer excels with idea development and organization.

Flames

by Liam, eighth grade writer

I. The First Shine

A seven-year-old can take any situation and turn it around. We have all been seven, and I know what I am talking about. Back then, when I got the violin, I had only the eyes to see what I wanted to see-- all pleasure and no business. The lights were shining.

II. The Foot Pad

Tahni was her name, and she was my first teacher. She taught in a performing room with a big window that let the sun in, located in the vast halls of the Temple of Performing Arts. Though soon after she moved to Nebraska, she had a kind of quiet but outgoing personality. She went with the crowd but also trail blazed. Her favorite trailblazing technique was THE PAD, a technique with both tracing skills and keeping your temper to a minimum level of frustration. It was the first thing about the violin I actually learned from a teacher and the only thing I have ever learned from a hunk of white cardboard with traces of my feet in marker showing me my foot posture. But it showed the basics, and--then--that was all I needed.

III. You Say Tomato and I Say Twinkle

I was there, the summit (the smallest metaphorical mound of dirt people could never even imagine calling a hill that ever would and ever shall be in the violin industry). I was ready for "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star." You know like, the "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, How I Wonder What You Are"--or something like that. I know you're probably rolling your eyes and thinking "big deal," but that was what it was back then. A big deal. The prospects were endless. I had ideas for everything--giant bow whirls that made me look like a fire juggler, running around figure eights while I was playing, etc. The world was my oyster and I liked it.

IV. No Twinkling in Here, No More

I was through with the Twinkles. Tahni told me that, and I was on to bigger things. I was just as happy, if not more, to go on past the Twinkles, as I was when I had gotten to them. I had no idea the work I had to do, but I was advancing.

V. Why I Like To Stay Home

Well, the power was out. It was cloudy, dark, and cold outside, and now it was all of those things inside. One moment I was playing the violin, and the next moment I couldn't see to save my life. A few minutes later, a single light came on, but this was not a light on a wall or anything like that; it was a bobbing flashlight scanning from left to right to find any (survivors?) people. The voice asked, "You all right?" It was my dad. "Yep," I replied. He said it was a blown fuse and got me a flashlight. I looked around with it. The sight was of comical chaos of overthrown furniture and quizzical faces. It was the most chaos three people and some pets could have. I played a few songs on the violin so that they wouldn't have to listen to dead silence for the entirety of the power outage. Within minutes, the power was back on and everyone was back to his or her activities previous to the power going out; that was, everyone except me. As I put the violin in its case, a smile so large that I was afraid it would somehow break my face because of the immensity of the grin broke out. Who said business can't be pleasurable?



VI. Hi, my name is Liam and I have no idea who you all are (aka first symphony practice)

I was scared. Oh boy, was I scared. I was in a room with blinding lights and a bunch of strangers who had come from different schools and musical backgrounds. I guess we were all afraid, but we got along very well. After that day we were never afraid of each other again.

VII. The Choice

Becker's was the violin store we usually went to, but this time it was special. We were embarking on a mission--a very important mission--one of great strength and courage. We were looking for a permanent violin for me. Because I needed to get the largest violin, we decided to get a permanent one. I had to go to a room in the back of the shop filled with violins of every color and style that violins could have. I had to try each one out, checking the best pitch for me, which made it a very hard and time-consuming job, but it had to be just right. After getting nearly to the end of the row of violins, I stumbled on a cherry wood one and that is still the one I have today. It was the right choice.

VIII. The Big Voice

The school orchestra teacher's name was Mrs. Daaza. She was a nice kind of lady so we were always nice to her. One day she came up to me and asked me my name because she had forgotten it. "Liam," I responded in the manliest and lowest voice I could muster. She wrote me down and told me to go through the entire book of music she had just given me to show her what I could do with a violin. That was when we understood each other.

IX. Black Beads and Brandenburg Concerto No. 3

The troublesome trio--that was what we called ourselves (because it was the best name we could think of) and it was made up of my friend Vaughn, Mrs. Daaza, and me. Our objective--the Brandenburg Concerto--and our reward was one of the coveted black beads that resembled hard work and determination. We were ready, and as the lights outside faded away, the lights inside brightened. It was show time. Afterwards we both got our beads, and everything was good. We didn't even have homework that day.

X. From the Top

The lights were all around us like a barricade between everyone and me. It was hard to see; I could just barely make out the walls enclosing us. I saw that people were there--friends, family, and instructors, the works--all there to help. Adrenaline pumped through my veins, air through my lungs, and music notes were about to go through our ears. "From the top," our conductor (Mr. Meyer) said. And he meant it.