Yuki Yamato

ENG 100

Formal Assignment #2: Narrative Project, Draft #3

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Speech Contest

I was looking at the dark high ceiling to relieve my tension. Even though it was cold because of air conditioners, I was sweating a lot. I felt like a criminal who would be judged in a court after a few minutes. I wanted to run away from there right now, but I was still too young to take a train or drive a car for a dozen miles to go home by myself. I lamented the unreasonableness of life. As the time neared, my tension increased rapidly. I had a dry mouth, and my body started trembling slightly. I tried to talk to a girl sitting next to me, but she looked like she was busy practicing for her speech. Thus, I did not disturb her, and I continued to wait until the moment of fate.

The summer in the second grade of my Japanese elementary school, I was called to my English teacher’s room after her class, and I was chosen as a participant for an English speech contest. I had already known that my teacher chooses one student every year, and the student had to take part in an annual English speech contest. However, I did not expect that I would be chosen at all. This is because I often kept chatting during her classes and caused troubled, so I could not say that I was an honor student. Moreover, it was the second year since I had started learning English. Therefore, the English speech contest was too hard for me. In Japan, many children start studying English in elementary school and keep studying for more than nine years. However, after graduating, most of them rarely have an opportunity to speak English in life.

On the other hand, my parents were highly pleased and proud of me after I told them about the speech contest. When I saw their happy faces, I thought that I did not want to disappoint them, so the next day, I asked my teacher for help because I had no idea how to make a English speech. After I considered my topic for a few days, I decided to make a three-minute speech about my family. From that day, I wrote my speech draft and had practiced for three months.

On the morning of the English speech contest, I did not want to wake up because I was already very nervous, so I wished that a meteorite fell to the earth. Unfortunately, my wish did not come true. My parents invited my grandparents to please me even though they lived in a far place from the hall. In fact, this surprise made me more nervous. Also, my mother was a very strict person, so she usually did not buy any toys or video games for me except my birthday and Christmas. However, when she noticed my nervousness in the waiting room, she bought *I SPY,* which was my favorite book for children. I was a little happy, but it also did not help me because I could not afford to read the book before my speech.

Thirty minutes before my speech, I parted form my parents and seven children including me were taken to the stage wing. My turn was the last in the group, so I was daydreaming for a while. When the girl sitting next to me stood up from the chair because her name was called by a chairman, my mind came back from the world of fantasy. At the same time, my nervousness also came back, and I was convinced that that situation was a real. I could not think that my turn would come next after her speech. I followed her with my eyes while she was walking toward the bright spotlight, and I tried to imagine that I would be under the spotlight a few minutes later.

While I was thinking many things such as possible failure, my name was called by the chairman. I wanted to stay in the old wood chair forever, but I knew that I could not turn back. Therefore, I prepared myself for giving my speech and walked toward the spotlight. After I reached and stood in the middle of the stage, I could not see anything for a while. Also, it was very hot due to the strong light. My eyes gradually used to the brightness, but next, I noticed that there were much more people than what I expected. Maybe the number of audiences was more than 300. I felt some judges who were sitting in the front of seats were looking at me and could not move for a while. The audiences gradually finished clapping, and there was a silence.

Fortunately, I was able to remember all the practice which I did for the three months, and I came to my senses. I took a deep breath to calm my mind, and I started my speech with the first line which I had practiced over and over again. Surprisingly, I had no memory after I said, “Hi! My name is Yuki Yamato. I am eight years old.” From the second line, all words came out of my mouth automatically. I felt like I was watching myself from above.

I could not control the movement of my mouth, but my mind was so clear and empty. I was very surprised the happening. At the same time, I worried about it because there was no way to check whether I made a mistake or not. While I was thinking about it, my mouth suddenly stopped speaking, so I realized that I finished my speech. In a few seconds, the stage was instantly enveloped in silence again. I tried to say something in the end. However, I felt hundreds of people looking at me, and I got into a panic. Then I suddenly made a bitter smile in spite of myself because I could not stand the quiet. I was so embarrassed, so I ran away toward the outside of the spotlight.