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Rhythmic End

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RHYTHMIC END

Johanna Stephens

The soloist's violin string snaps, and with it comes an explosive silence – an absence of sound that presses on the eardrums and pushes needles into the inner ear.

It's ruined - everything is ruined in a burst of color. It's so bright and it sends beads of light shimmering down from the ceiling, catching in the audience's hair and being inhaled into its collective lungs. The concert has ended, and it can't be played over. This beautiful failure, devoid of sound but overwhelmingly abundant in vision and emotion, brings back an old thought, a potent idea –

The end of one thing is the beginning of another. The end of sound is the beginning of color. The end of color is the beginning of the feeling that comes from hearing the most beautiful piece of music. It fills you, lifts you, sends you soaring through each gently rising crescendo and bold fortissimo. At the same time, your heart is cracking into tiny shreds of glass that stick in the palms, shoot through the veins and emerge where the heart used to be, continuing the cycle of taking and giving back.

The audience pulses towards the exits. The silence is still pressing and the light is still shimmering. Their souls are still soaring and their hearts are still shredding. This concert's end is the start of tonight – the soloist lost her audience, but gave them the gift of a blank slate, a way to erase wrongs and create rights. They won't remember the exact moment they received it, but they will remember the burst of color that came when the string first snapped.