

# Shining Star

*By: Nikita Joshi*



“Guess what!” Sumitra exclaimed as sat down for lunch. Alohi knew better than to not ask what was happening (especially when her best friend was kicking her legs wildly under the table).

“What?” Alohi asked, exasperated. Sumitra got excited for basically anything and Alohi was the opposite. She had hoped Sumitra would stop in middle school, but no.

“The talent show!!!” Sumitra shrieked so loud that the entire school turned to look at her before going back to their own lunches.

“And the best part is you are performing this year!” Sumitra said, barely keeping her voice quiet enough to stop others from staring.

Alohi hated performing. She liked watching others perform, but she hated it herself. One time, her mom had signed her up for a drama class. She was such a bad actor, her teacher made her sit out for the play! She didn’t have stage fright. She just felt like she had no talent. Sumitra, on the other hand, was a talented, graceful dancer. She was so good at dancing, the other kids looked past Sumitra’s screaming and other quirks just because of her dancing. If

Alohi had any talent, she would definitely sign up for the show, but what would she perform? She was snapped out of her thoughts by an excited shrill from Sumitra.

“You could make a speech!” Sumitra exclaimed, her eyes sparkling with excitement. “Your dream is to be a politician, so this could be good practice for your future.”

“That’s just my dream. It’s not going to happen,” Alohi replied.

“Then, what is the point of a dream?” Sumitra asked with hope.

“To be a dream. You can have a dream where you are Black Widow while you sleep, but in the end, it’s just a dream. It can’t actually happen.”

Sumitra hesitated for the first time in her life. “Maybe it can come true. There are a lot of possibilities in the world and you have to take advantage of them. You just need some hope. The way I see it, you only have 2 choices: hope or despair, so choose hope.” She paused. “You promised.”

Alohi hated seeing Sumitra like this. She was passionate about following her dreams. It was easy for her. She had natural talent unlike Alohi. She would never have Sumitra’s talent. Some people were meant for success and others weren’t. There was no hope for Alohi, but she did promise. Sumitra always performed in the talent show, and everytime, she asked her to perform. Last year, she had been so persistent that Alohi had promised to perform the next year. She knew that if she signed up, she would embarrass herself, but she had promised. “I’ll do it,” Alohi blurted against her will.

Sumitra had a look of pure shock that quickly changed to the most broad grin Alohi had ever seen. Sumitra was smiling from ear to ear. She hugged Alohi so tight, she could have caused permanent damage to Alohi’s lungs. Alohi almost felt good about her decision after seeing her friend so happy.

“We can rehearse together. Then, we can talk about our performances weeks after it has happened. After that, you will become president because of your amazing speech!!!” Sumitra squealed so loud, Alohi almost went deaf. No one in the lunchroom cared though. They were all in shock that Alohi was signing up for the talent show. Everyone knew that she hated performing after hearing Sumitra talk about it so much.

Alohi walked over to the sign up sheet with everyone’s eyes on her and signed her name in *permanent ink*. There was no going back now. Sumitra raced up to her, gave her another big hug, and added her name. A swarm of middle schoolers followed them, signing up for the

show. They walked past Alohi saying things like “Good luck!” and “You are going to do great”.<sup>a</sup> The comments were supposed to make Alohi feel better, but it just made her more stressed.

Alohi walked home that day, thinking of what she would make her speech about. She thought about making her speech about the stress she was under, but she couldn’t figure out what she could say in front of the entire school. *Tomorrow*, she thought. *I will make my speech tomorrow.*

The next day, Sumitra came over to dance while Alohi made her speech. Sumitra’s music did not help her come up with her speech. The day after that, her mom pulled her aside with a proud gleam in her eyes. “I am so proud of you,” she said. “Look at you, chasing your dreams!” There it was again. That word. Dreams.

Alohi was terrified of letting everyone down. Everytime she was satisfied with a speech, she heard a nagging voice in the back of head yelling that it wasn’t good enough. That voice always won. The stress was enough without Alohi telling herself that her dreams would never come true. She had believed that she might achieve her dream, but now she was positive her dream would never become reality. Looking at all the paper in her trash can, all of the failed attempts, she felt hopeless.

The day of the talent show rolled around and everyone was buzzing with excitement. Everyone except Alohi. She sat alone in a corner backstage while everyone else obsessed over every detail of their costumes. This was it. She would let the entire school down. Her parents, her classmates, everyone was out there just to be disappointed. Sumitra saw her and got a worried look on her face. She walked over and sat next to Alohi.

“Everyone gets stage fright,” Sumitra said. “You’ll be okay.”

“I have nothing to show,” Alohi admitted, her face in palms.

“This again,” Sumitra replied, reassuringly. You have tons of talent.”

“No I don’t, I couldn’t even write a speech. How will my dream come true if I can’t write something as simple as a single speech? I don’t have natural talent like you.”

“Natural talent,” Sumitra almost fell over, laughing. “Never heard of it.”

“What?!” Alohi exclaimed. “You have loads of it. You are such a good dancer. You are made for success.”

“I don’t have *natural* talent. I had to practice super hard for years to get this good. It is all in an effort to achieve my dream.”

Alohi looked around. I suddenly dawned upon her. All these talented people backstage were only so talented because of years of practice.

“But of course hope is a very important part of it,” Sumitra continued. “Without hope there is no motivation. You just need a reason to be hopeful.”

“I’ll do it!” Alohi blurted just like she had when she signed up for the talent show.

“What?” Sumitra asked, confused.

“I am going to go up there and give a speech. I’ll have to improvise.”

A huge grin spread across Sumitra’s face. It was bigger than any grin Alohi had seen before.

“And up next is Sumitra Seshadri!” the announcer called.

“I hope you know what you’re talking about because you are up after me,” Sumitra called, chuckling.

She stepped through the curtains and the crowd cheered. Everyone in the school knew how talented Sumitra was when it came to dancing. Alohi hoped that one day the school would cheer like that for her, knowing that she was talented. She knew deep down that as long as she hoped that and committed, it would happen to her.

She listened to the music and imagined her friend dancing in front of everyone, making them proud. Finally, the music stopped and Sumitra walked off stage, smiling and waving before reappearing behind the stage.

“You’re up next!” she exclaimed, still grinning. Even her strong focus when dancing couldn’t stop her smile.

“Up next we have Alohi Kahale!” the announcer exclaimed.

“It’s time,” Alohi said, feeling like throwing up.

Alohi walked toward the curtain, her classmates cheering her on. She stepped through the curtain and was greeted by crowds of cheering. Everyone wanted to see what she had to say. It made her feel powerful like she could do anything. She realized how bright lights were on stage. Movies and TV shows did not lie.

Her knees buckled a bit but she kept walking. She stepped up to the microphone and stood awkwardly, waiting for the applause to die down. When the audience finally calmed down, she took a deep breath and stood a little straighter.

“Hope is the most important thing to hold on to,” Alohi began. “The way I see it, you could have hope or despair. Choose hope. You should always have a reason to have hope, and I am hopeful because I know my talented friend Sumitra Seshadri will always be here with me.”

Alohi felt like she had been talking forever, but she was able to speak so easily like this was what she was meant to do. When she was finished, there was a pause and she was certain that she had messed up before everyone got up and cheered and whistled. They kept applauding for 2 minutes. Alohi walked off stage smiling from ear to ear.

When she reached backstage, everyone rushed up to her and hugged her, bombarding her with questions about how she prepared and why she chose her topic. Sumitra cleared a path, telling the other students to give Alohi space before running up to her and hugging Alohi as tight as ever.

“Can’t breathe!” Alohi managed.

Sumitra released Alohi and started talking about how amazing she was until 3 performances had passed. “You did great, too,” Alohi said with a chuckle. She knew that even though everyone was fussing over her, many other students were just as talented as she was.

When the show was finally over, everyone came out for a bow before walking off stage to meet their friends and family in the crowd. Sumitra and Alohi walked through the mob of people before Sumitra’s little brother found her and led her to her parents.

Alohi searched for her family until she finally spotted her mom, who pulled her aside in a big hug. “I knew I gave you the perfect name!” she exclaimed, her eyes shining with pride.

“What?” Alohi asked when her mom finally released her.

“I named you Alohi, meaning shining or brilliant,” Alohi’s mother explained. “It was my dream that one day, you would become a shining star. Today, that dream became a reality. You are all I could have hoped for. You are my shining star.”

# *The End*



# Author's Note



In my story, the main character needs to find hope that her dream will come true. She does this with the help of her best friend Sumitra.