

GROWTH

Teammates slowly gathered around me. “What are we going to do, Zhang? We can’t penetrate their defense!” As the top scorer of the team, I was gasping for air with sweat trickling down my skin, trying to cool down the overdriving engine. I can feel the anxious gaze of my teammates on my face imposing a burdensome pressure. “We can do it! Where’s there a will, there’s a way!” A mixture of excitement and nervousness fueled my rush of adrenalin. I kept scoring, one jump shot after another. To my despair, despite the efforts I made, the numbers on the scoreboard relentlessly showed the cruel fact that defeat is inevitable. “Pass me the ball!” I shouted at my teammates while running towards the other side of the court. Ignoring the two tall and sturdy senior grade players who blocked my way, I rushed toward the hoop with resolution. “Where’s there a will there’s a way” was the last thought bouncing in my head when cramps of my left leg allowed the defense player easily blocked my driving to the hoop. Lying on the ground painfully, I could only helplessly watch the opponents dribble towards our side, tearing down our defenses. The flames of sunset slowly burnt out my last hopes of victory.

Staring at the ceiling, I lay awake in the night when my roommates were roaming in their sweet dreams.” Why can’t I see the way even when my will was so intense?” Edmond Dantès was the first to come to my mind. In the dungeon that no light could reach, he’s so desperate to break out, to join his fiancée and to revenge. However, nothing happened, no exoneration, not even an explanation. “Indeed, a powerful determination doesn’t necessarily lead to a solution” I was saying to myself. “You shouldn’t arrive at a conclusion so brashly” another voice uttered in my mind. Dantès didn’t resign to the terrible fate or give up. Instead, he not only planned his escape meticulously but also refined his manners and behavior assiduously in the 14 years of imprisonment. In the end, out of the burial shroud comes the Count of Monte Cristo who fulfilled his purpose. A determined will always lead to a path. However, rash enthusiasm will never change anything without deliberation and only patience can dissipate apprehensiveness.

After the “midsummer night’s dream”, a new chance came with the New Year. Volunteering to direct our class’s drama play which is inspired by the popular TV series “Prison Break” in the Christmas Party I really wanted to make a difference after last year’s play was not so well received. Instead of shouting “we can do it”, this time I made a specific schedule to set down the goals of each day, each rehearsal for each member. Having suffered the painful lose, I have learnt by heart that the strength of one man can never promise triumph. When members from the dancing team suggested that they could design a dance to show the fear of the escaping “prisoners” in a funnier way, I immediately cut the script to make room for their creativity. The music team soon pick out the “Mission Impossible” theme song to enhance the comical atmosphere and the lights team suggested that a little while of complete darkness before the dance is going to prepare the audience for it. With the help of the actor selection team, I found just the right person to play Santa Clause when Hoban, an exchange student from France, joined the cast. When the actors couldn’t remember their actions and lines even after several practices, when the time of the party had moved up and when funds for the play was not enough even to rent the costumes, I patiently reallocated the tasks, modified the schedules and found replacements for certain costumes through discussions with my teammates rather than proposing bold moves obstinately. The applauds from

over 600 audiences and a shoulder tap from my teacher marked a new dawn in my life, a life that welcomed changes and self-realizations.