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## Setting: Stage

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### **Abstract**

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"The most comforting place in the entire world is in the audience of a theater, during a musical. The darkness of the auditorium surrounds like a quilt, a protection from the deafening sound of silence."

### **Cover Page Footnote**

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# KERRY MEAGHER

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## SETTING: STAGE

The most comforting place in the entire world is in the audience of a theater, during a musical. The darkness of the auditorium surrounds like a quilt, a protection from the deafening sound of silence.

Everyone stirs in their seats as the opening chords of the overture begin to play, piercing the black void in which the crowd has been comfortably wrapped in. The melody of the overture makes hints as to what's to come. The beauty and tranquility of the piece brings the audience to weeping eyes, while I giggle silently to myself because I know every note by heart. I quietly sing the words of each song as the melodies slowly pass; my lips tickle as the breathy words escape from my mouth.

The final sour notes of the overture play and there is a silent moment. The anticipation is strong, the audience slowly takes in breath, to make sure that not one note is missed. The first chords of the opening song shock the audience into the play's atmosphere as the stage comes alive with the endless color and movement of the actors and actresses as they take the stage. The song and dance begins to set the mood. The words of the songs escape from the depths of their throats into the dark abyss that was once the audience. The melody flows through the vacant auditorium, while I lip-sing the songs with the cast. The music stops and for a split second, a sting of silence overtakes the crowd, before there is a burst of thunderous clapping that shakes every crystal in the chandelier.

The energy peaks, and the audience can't wait for more. The stage lights dim down as the house lights come on. There is a pause before the first few people stand up to stretch their legs. Those still in suspense stay in their seats for fear that they will miss what they have paid to see, while others venture into the lobby for a mid-dream treat.

The play continues on after the brief intermission, when the thunder deadens to a scatter. Hours and hours of splendid fun or drastic tragedy are played out by the actors as if it is their life that they are telling. The audience rolls in laughter as a character on stage takes a comedic fall or blubbers in tears as the heroine has her heart stolen away.

The opening notes to the final song ring out and the lingering laughter or last set of tears drift slowly away. The choruses of actors come together on the stage and fuse their voices into one final goodbye to the audience. Then in an instant the music stops and the applauding audience overtakes the acoustics. Flowers are thrown to the ones who did great. Cheers and applause continue as the cast takes one final bow.

The audience grows tired as they are slowly brought back to reality. They file down the aisles and exit through the doors. The cold air shocks the warm feeling of comfort that had been theirs only a moment before. This world they are leaving will be gone for good in a day or two. But the rare opportunity of being a part of something this special will stay with them for the rest of their lives.