

Reflections on *The Soloist*

Read the last paragraph on page 37 all the way through to its ending on page 38. The paragraph concludes, “It is his way to be alone without fear.”

1. Do you enjoy being alone? If not, explain why. If so, how do you pass the time and what do you think you enjoy most about it?

Sometimes, we distract ourselves from feelings such as fear or loneliness. Tchaikovsky, one of the most well-documented composers in history, wrote in one of his diaries that he was filled with tremendous fear before conducting at Andrew Carnegie’s new Music Hall (known today, of course, as Carnegie Hall). For Tchaikovsky, his fear was nearly paralyzing.

2. Have you ever felt paralyzed by fear?
Is this mental illness?
Can it be overcome?