

# **KID** ***Courageous***



**C. D.**  
**Nichols**

# Kids Courageous

C. D. Nichols



Eloquent Books

Copyright © 2010

All rights reserved – C. D. Nichols

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, or by any information storage retrieval system, without the permission, in writing, from the publisher.

Eloquent Books  
An imprint of Strategic Book Group  
P.O. Box 333  
Durham CT 06422  
[www.StrategicBookGroup.com](http://www.StrategicBookGroup.com)

ISBN: 978-1-61897-575-1

Printed in the United States of America

Book Design: Suzanne Kelly

# Table of Contents

The Guitar .....	1
The Error of Her Ways .....	13
Nathan's Problem .....	21
Take Your Partner .....	27
Soar with the Eagles .....	37
We'll Fix 'Em.....	43
Sam's Hero .....	49
A Christmas Miracle.....	55



# The Guitar

There it was! Without a doubt, it was the most beautiful instrument in the whole wide world! It was all shiny and black with a silver flash streaked up the fingerboard. Todd wanted that guitar more than he had ever wanted anything before. Every afternoon on his way home from school, he would stand in front of the window of Hallam's Music Store with his eyes transfixed on the black guitar.

Even though he couldn't play guitar, it was Todd's dream to own it one day. He would have lessons. *But to do that*, Todd reasoned, *I have to have an instrument to learn on.*

It was going to be Todd's sixteenth birthday soon, and he had hinted to his parents about how much he'd love a guitar. His father told him it depended on how well he did on his final exams. That complicated things! School and Todd just didn't gel. He wanted to do well, but he just couldn't seem to concentrate. His mind kept wandering to more interesting things like bands and guitars. He was always daydreaming, which meant he was forever in trouble and being sent from the room.

It had been several weeks since Todd had first seen the black guitar in the shop's window, and he was instantly besotted. He couldn't wait for school to finish each day so that he could go and admire it.

One afternoon as Todd stood wistfully staring at the guitar, the owner of the shop came to the front of the store. The owner saw Todd standing there, so he approached him.

“Back again I see,” he said, “I’ve seen you admiring that guitar every day in the window. Come in and have a good look.”

Todd smiled and followed the storekeeper inside.

“There you go,” Mr. Hallam said as he handed the guitar to Todd. He helped Todd adjust the shoulder strap and positioned the guitar in front of him. It felt good!

Todd had spent many hours watching DVDs at home. Now as he looked in the mirror, he pictured himself as one of those guitarists. He ran his fingers up and down the fingerboard, pretending to play.

“Feels good, doesn’t it?” Mr. Hallam added, “Run your fingers over the frets.”

Todd closed his eyes, imagining he was on a stage with screaming fans all around. A surge of excitement filled him; adrenaline powered his body. He *had* to own this guitar.

“Can you play?” Mr. Hallam asked, jolting Todd back to reality.

“No, but I’m going to learn. I want to have my own band one day,” Todd replied.

“Well, you couldn’t have a better instrument than this one,” Mr. Hallam said as Todd reluctantly handed the guitar back to the storekeeper.

“If you want it, I can store it out back for you,” Mr. Hallam said.

“Would you? I’ve got a birthday coming up soon, and I think my parents intend buying it for me,” Todd said.

Taking a pad and paper from the counter, Mr. Hallam said, “Give me your name and a contact number, and I’ll keep the guitar out back for you. I can only hold it for a week. If I haven’t heard from your parents by then, I’ll have to put it back in the shop.”

“Thanks, Mr. Hallam. I’ll have a talk with my parents tonight,” Todd said.

Seeing his bus approaching, Todd hurried out to catch it. All the way home on the bus, Todd mentally played his guitar. He

pictured his fingers deftly sliding up and down the shiny, black fingerboard as he played one chord after another.

While his parents were relaxing in the living room after dinner that night, Todd told them about the guitar.

“There’s this awesome guitar in Hallam’s Music Store. It’s totally mad! It’s black and shiny and not very expensive. Mr. Hallam let me hold it today. I tell you—it felt so good in my hands. I’ve got to have it! It would make a really cool birthday present,” Todd said, looking pleadingly at his parents.

“Mr. Hallam put it in the storeroom so that you can have a look at it. You only need to leave a small deposit,” Todd said, oozing excitement. His parents smiled.

“Your mother and I will discuss it, Todd, and we’ll let you know in the morning,” his father said.

Todd agreed and then went to his room, leaving his parents to make their decision.

“I don’t think we can afford a guitar and a birthday party,” Todd’s mother said.

“I know, love, but I haven’t seen Todd so enthusiastic about anything in such a long time. It would be a shame to dampen his enthusiasm,” Todd’s father said.

“I’ve got to go into town tomorrow, so I’ll go to Hallam’s and have a look at this *totally awesome guitar*. I’ll find out how much it costs,” Mrs. Holt said.

The next day at school, Todd bubbled with excitement as he told Sam and Allan about the guitar.

“Mr. Hallam let me hold it. Totally awesome! I couldn’t believe how great it felt. We could form a band when I get it. Sam can play keyboard, and Allan can be on the drums.” The boys eagerly agreed.

In chemistry class, they sat together at the back of the room, planning their band’s first gig. They got so excited that they forgot where they were. They began talking so loudly that Mr. Kirby, the science teacher, screamed at them.

“Would you boys like to tell the rest of the class what you think is more interesting than this chemistry lesson?” he asked.

“It’s nothing, sir,” Todd said.

“I disagree, Todd. It must be important for you to think you can disturb the whole class,” Mr. Kirby insisted.

“We were discussing something private,” Allan blurted out.

“If it’s so private, why can’t it wait until after class?” Mr. Kirby asked.

It was all too much for Todd. He jumped to his feet, grabbed his books, and headed for the door.

“I’m going. I hate this class! Knowing how to mix chemicals won’t get me a gig,” he snapped.

Sam and Allan laughed. This made Todd feel smart, so he continued talking back to Mr. Kirby until he was sent from the room and told to go see the principal.

He didn’t know why he acted the way he had. He just hated being in the confines of the classroom. He wanted to be out earning a living, not cramped up in a smelly classroom being told what to do.

As he waited for the principal, he thought about the DVDs he watched after school. He remembered the antics of the guitarists as they performed. That would be him one day. This imagining took his mind off the trouble he was in.

Each afternoon Todd stood in front of the mirror, holding his tennis racquet like a guitar and performing for hours. He would use his hair brush as a microphone. That was the life for him, travelling the world with thousands of screaming fans calling his name and chasing him for autographs. Who needed math, English, or chemistry? Not him!

“Not you again, Todd,” Mr. Dickson, the principal, said as he opened his office door and spied Todd waiting. “Come in, and we’ll have another talk.”

Todd walked slowly into the principal’s office. He felt ashamed of his actions. He thought he knew what Mr. Dickson

was going to say. After all, he'd heard it three times in the last two weeks, but it was different this time.

"We've reached the stage where I must bring your parents in to discuss your behaviour. You've made so many promises to me in the past to behave, and you haven't stuck to them, have you, Todd?"

"No, sir," Todd mumbled. He knew that when his father found out how much of a troublemaker he'd been there would certainly be no party and—worst of all—no guitar.

"If you'd just give me one more chance, sir, I promise I won't disrupt any of my classes again. Please don't contact my parents," Todd pleaded.

"I think you've had enough chances, Todd. I've heard all these promises before. I'm going to have to call your home and arrange an appointment with your parents. As for you, go back to class, and I don't want to see you again until you're in the company of your parents," Mr. Dickson said.

When Todd arrived home that afternoon, he could tell that Mr. Dickson had called by the way his mother greeted him. She didn't say anything to Todd, so he was left to stew on it until his father came home.

"Todd, come here!" his father called. There was anger in his voice.

Todd walked slowly into the living room where both his parents were seated. He felt sick to his stomach, and his hands were sweaty. He was in deep trouble.

"Your mother received a call from your principal today; it seems you've been being a real troublemaker at school. What do you have to say for yourself?" his father asked.

Todd looked at both his parents. His mother looked very disappointed, and his father wore an angry scowl. Todd hated upsetting his parents.

"I don't know, Dad. I just hate school."

"That's no excuse, son. We all have to do things we don't like in our daily activities, but we don't act up like you have.

You only have a short time to go before the end of the year, and then you can leave school, but if you don't have good grades, how do you ever expect to get a decent job? I just don't understand what gets into you. You're not a stupid boy. If you made up your mind, you could skim through your schoolwork. Now your mother has to miss her meeting, and I have to take time off from work to meet with your principal tomorrow to discuss your stupidity. I know you have the ability to do well if you'd just buckle down."

Todd wasn't happy when he went to bed that night. He knew that by the time Mr. Dickson got through telling his parents about all he'd been doing, there would definitely be no guitar.

When they arrived at the school the next morning, Todd and his parents were shown into Mr. Dickson's office by the school secretary.

"Thank you for meeting with me, Mr. and Mrs. Holt. Please be seated," Mr. Dickson said. "Todd, you'd better sit, too. We may be here for awhile."

Mr. Dickson then began to give Todd's parents a rundown on all the trouble Todd had been in over the past year.

"I've given Todd detentions, and he hasn't turned up. I've given him plenty of chances to improve. Nothing's worked, so I thought it was time we got together and discussed where to go from here before I have to suspend him," Mr. Dickson said.

After much discussion, Mr. Dickson finally agreed to give Todd one last chance. His work and behaviour would be monitored by all of his teachers, and he would be suspended at the first sign of trouble. That would mean he wouldn't get to sit for his final exams, and he would not be allowed to attend the end-of-year formal.

Todd went to class, knowing he hadn't heard the last of it. He knew he would be in for more punishment when he got home.

For the next two weeks, Todd tried extra hard to pay attention in class and complete all his work. Even his homework was done and handed in on time.

Then one morning in woodworking, he was waiting for Mr. Curtis, the teacher, to explain to the class their options for their major project. As he leaned on a bench, the leg gave way, and all the tools went everywhere. Jumping back in fright, Todd blurted out some swear words rather loudly. Sam and Allan laughed, and so did the rest of the class.

“Okay, Todd. Leave the room please,” Mr. Curtis bellowed. “Wait out there, and I’ll be out in a moment.”

Todd sat defiantly at his bench; he didn’t think he’d done anything wrong. Why should he be punished? It wasn’t his fault if the leg was faulty.

“I said, ‘Leave the room!’” Mr. Curtis screamed, angrily slamming the hammer in his hand down on the bench.

Todd left the room—in trouble again. This was definitely the end of his guitar.

After sitting outside for ten minutes with no sign of Mr. Curtis, Todd decided to look in the window to see what was going on in class. He couldn’t believe his eyes! Mr. Curtis was showing the class a guitar. It was bright red with a blaze of black going from the fingerboard to the end of the guitar.

“How many are interested in making a guitar for your major project? Put your hand up please. No calling out,” Mr. Curtis said. Four boys raised their hands.

“That’s four. Anyone else? I have to order the wood this afternoon, so make up your minds now.”

“Please, sir. Can I make one?” Todd said, coming back into the room.

“You, get outside! I’ll be out to talk to you in a minute,” Mr. Curtis snapped. Todd opened his mouth to speak but then thought better of it and returned to his seat outside the classroom.

While he waited, Todd wondered how he could convince Mr. Curtis that he was sorry for disturbing the class. He really wanted to make a guitar for his major project.

He was concentrating so hard that he didn’t hear the janitor approach with his wheelie bin and broom.

“Blimey! Are you out here again?” he asked Todd. “I think you spend as much time outside as I do. What did you do this time?”

“I bumped a bench, and some tools fell off,” Todd mumbled.

“I suppose the other kids started to laugh, and you thought you were pretty smart? I used to be a smart aleck when I was a kid; I used to make the other kids laugh, too. Funny thing: I was always outside, and the others were in class learning.” He bent down, picked up a can, and threw it in the wheelie bin.

“They’ve all got good jobs now, and I’m here cleaning up after you dirty kids. I learned one thing, though: I only cheated myself! The kids I was trying to impress thought I was a joke. You know, mate, if you had any guts, you’d own up to the teacher for whatever you did, then go use your brain to learn with. You only get one chance,” the janitor said. He walked off down the playground, stopping occasionally to pick up a can or a wrapper.

Finally, Mr. Curtis came out to see Todd.

“I’m very disappointed in you, Todd. I thought you were improving, but instead you talked back to me in front of the class,” Mr. Curtis said.

“I’m really sorry, sir. I didn’t mean to. The others started to laugh at me, and it sort of . . . egged me on. When the tools fell on the floor, they gave me a fright, and the swear words just popped out. I didn’t mean to disrupt the class, and I’m ready to take any punishment you want to give me.”

Mr. Curtis was surprised. He was expecting more arrogance, but Todd seemed to be genuinely sorry.

“I’m pleased to see you showing some remorse, Todd, but I do think you’ve earned a detention. See me at lunchtime, and I’ll put you to work cleaning up the storeroom. As for now, you can come back into class if you’re prepared to do some work.”

Lunchtime came, and Todd was there waiting at the storeroom door right on the bell.

“I’m impressed, Todd. You’re right on time. Come in, and I’ll explain what I want done. All these small pieces of wood go in that box over there. The long ones can be stacked in the corner.

These tools go back on the wall in their marked places, and the floor needs sweeping. I'll be back at first bell," Mr. Curtis said as he went off to have some lunch.

Todd worked hard, stacking the wood and putting away the tools. He had just finished sweeping the floor and was returning the broom to the cupboard when he spied something in the corner. It was a guitar, and it was painted a vivid blue. It was all ready for the strings. Obviously, it was somebody's major project. He picked it up, closed his eyes, and visualised himself playing in a band.

"Hooray! Hooray! Wooh!" the imaginary crowd screamed. He took a bow. His hands stroked the fingerboard. Todd really wanted it.

Todd thought about gently putting it out the window. Nobody ever went around that side of the building. He could get it after school, but that would be stealing. He was a bit stupid at times, but he was always honest.

As he replaced the guitar, he saw Mr. Curtis standing in the doorway.

"It's a beautiful job, sir," Todd said.

"Thank you, Todd. That was my very first attempt. I've made six since then; each one is better than the last."

"I'd do anything to be able to make one," Todd said.

"I really think you mean that. If I give you the chance, you won't let me down, will you?" Mr. Curtis asked.

"No, sir, I promise," Todd said trying hard to suppress a grin.

"Okay then, you go and have some lunch, and tomorrow I'll show you how to cut out your guitar," Mr. Curtis said.

Todd was so excited that he couldn't get to sleep that night, and when he finally did, he kept dreaming of guitars, screaming fans, and flashing lights. His fingers slid effortlessly up and down the fingerboard of his guitar. Then he'd dream again, but this time the janitor would be shaking his broom at him and saying, "Have some guts and buckle down. You only get one chance, mate."

## Kids Courageous

For the first two periods the next day, Todd was a model student; in fact, his English teacher offered to let him go to the nurse's office if he wasn't feeling well. Todd just smiled and said he was feeling fine. Finally, it was time to go to woodworking class. Mr. Curtis took Todd to one side.

"Are you sure about this, Todd?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, I sure am!" Todd said excitedly.

"Well, then let's get on with it," Mr. Curtis said as he handed Todd the wood for his guitar.

The bandsaw buzzed, and Todd carefully cut around the outline that he and Mr. Curtis had drawn.

He was so focused on the job that he didn't hear the bell ring or notice the others leaving.

"That's it for today, Todd. Put your name on the back of your work, and put it in the storeroom with the rest," Mr. Curtis said.

"Please, sir, can I come back at lunchtime and do some more?" Todd asked.

"Well, if you really want to. I'll be here marking some work, so I see no reason why you can't. I shouldn't discourage you, should I? I've never seen you so enthusiastic."

For the next two weeks, Todd worked on his guitar at lunchtime and during woodworking class. He carefully sanded and glued. Before he knew it, the guitar was ready to paint. Todd chose purple with a gold blaze up the front. He was so proud of his effort. So was Mr. Curtis.

All the class admired Todd's work and told him what a great job he'd done, which made Todd feel very proud of his achievement. Mr. Curtis even sent Todd to show it to the principal.

"Excellent, excellent job, Todd," he said, "I knew there was a talented student in there somewhere."

West Haven High had an open house for Education Week. All teachers selected their students' best work to display for parents and friends to view.

Todd's guitar was displayed along with the work of other students in the woodworking class. He stood near his guitar that night and thought his chest would burst with pride as he listened to the comments of other students and their parents when they saw his guitar.

"Wow! Look at that guitar! Isn't it fantastic? I've never seen such a beautiful guitar. I wish it were mine."

"That guitar couldn't have been done by a student. I'll bet the teacher did most of the work," a balding, short man said.

"I'm afraid you'd lose that bet. I didn't help much at all . . . only to give advice. It was made by one of my very dedicated students," Mr. Curtis said.

"Well, that being the case, you must be very proud of their efforts. A very gifted student," the man said.

"That he is!" Mr. Curtis replied and then smiled at Todd.

It was a good feeling to be appreciated for a job well done. It had always given Todd a buzz when he acted stupid in class and the other students had laughed at him, but that feeling was nothing compared to the pride he felt in achieving his goal.

Todd realised that night that if he put as much effort into everything he aspired to accomplish as he had into making his guitar, then he could achieve anything he wanted. From that night on, he buckled down and studied. He paid attention in class and managed good grades on his exams.

Now with his final exams over, Todd had time to take the guitar lessons his parents were paying for as a reward for all his hard work. He knew learning to play an instrument would take considerable time and practise, but he also knew that he could achieve anything as long as he was prepared to work diligently for it.

Buy the B&N ePub version at:-

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/kid-courageous-c-d-nichols/1102127677?ean=2940013692145>

Buy the kindle version at:-

<http://www.amazon.com/Kid-Courageous-ebook/dp/B007418AU0/ref>