

Let It Go

BY MARA SUNDWALL

(Based on a true story)

*I, the Lord, will forgive
whom I will forgive, but of you
it is required to forgive all men
(D&C 64:10).*

Emily burst through the front door in tears. She dropped her bag on the floor and ran to her room. Mom followed her and knocked on the bedroom door. “Em, can I come in?” she asked.

Emily answered with a quiet “yes,” and Mom opened the door.

“Is everything OK, honey?” Mom asked.

“Nothing is OK!” Emily said. “You won’t believe what happened today. Jenny handed out her birthday party invitations after school, and I was the

only girl in our class who wasn’t invited. I feel horrible. I am so mad at Jenny.”

“I can imagine how that would feel,” Mom said. “What do you think you should do?”

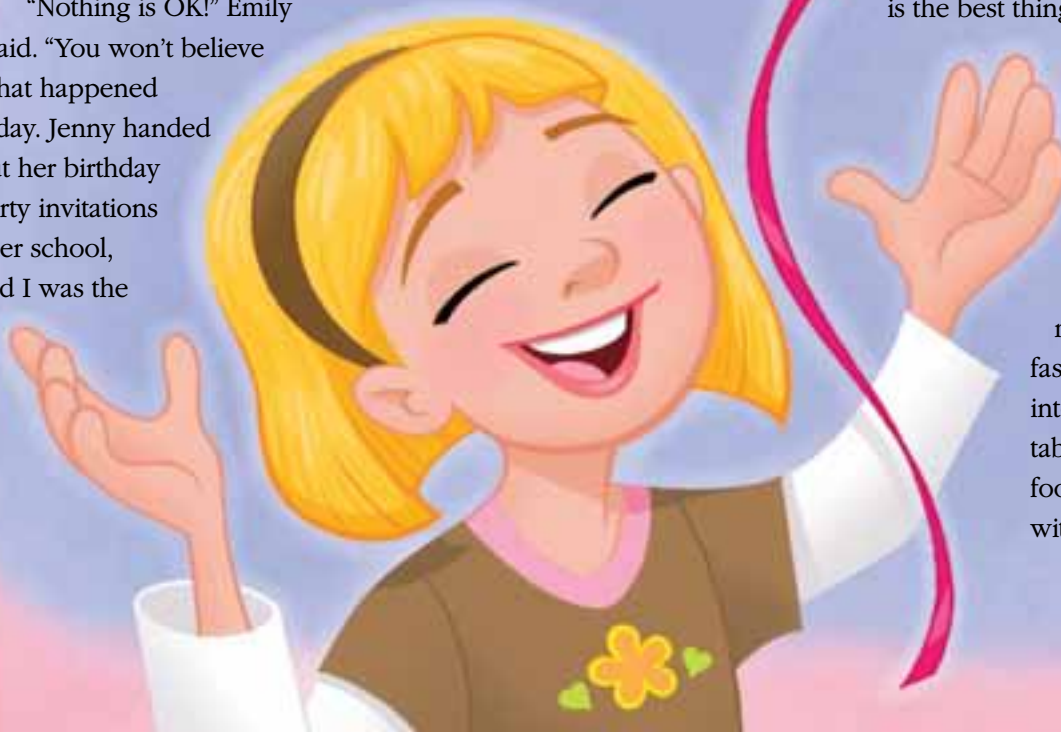
“I’m never speaking to her again. Not in a million years,” Emily sobbed.

Mom put her arms around Emily and stroked her hair. “Do you think that is the best thing to do?” she asked.

“I don’t care,” Emily moaned. “Jenny is so mean.”

The next morning at breakfast, Emily slumped into her seat at the table. She pushed her food around the plate with her fork.

“Emily, Mom





told me you didn't get an invitation to Jenny's party. Is that what's bothering you?" Dad asked.

"You wouldn't understand," Emily said.

"Try me," Dad said.

"It's just that my feelings are hurt. It's embarrassing to be left out."

"I do understand, Em," Dad said. "But remember that we can feel better when we forgive others. Jesus forgave everyone who offended Him. Try to forgive, and then let it go. It's what Jesus would want you to do."

Emily walked to school with her friend Lucy. Lucy talked about Jenny's upcoming party all the way to school. Emily listened quietly, too embarrassed to tell her friend that she hadn't been invited. At recess, all of the girls in Emily's class huddled together and talked excitedly about the party. Emily wandered away from the group and sat by herself on the swings. She glared at everyone. She felt very alone.

During gym class, Emily's friend Gina, who usually picked her first when choosing teams, chose Jenny first instead. Emily was the last to be picked. She could hardly hold back the

tears, and her stomach began to hurt. She asked the teacher if she could be excused from class to go to the nurse's office.


Later, as Emily waited for her mother to pick her up from school, she thought about what her father had said about forgiveness, and about how Jesus had forgiven everyone who had hurt or offended Him. But Emily couldn't do that. She couldn't forgive Jenny for making her feel this way.

Emily and Mom rode home in silence. When Mom pulled into the garage, Emily jumped out of the car and ran to her room. She stared out the window until Mom called her for dinner.

At dinner, Emily's brother Jack talked eagerly about his day at preschool. Emily's dad told a funny story he heard at work. Emily sat in silence, staring down at her plate. After dinner, Mom announced, "We'll be having family home evening now."

"But, Mom, it's Thursday. We had family home evening on Monday," Emily said.

"It's an emergency session to help you with what's been bothering you," Mom said, smiling.



The family gathered in the living room. They sang “Help Me, Dear Father,”* and Jack said the opening prayer. Then Mom left the room and returned with four helium-filled balloons. Each balloon was attached to a colorful ribbon. Mom handed a balloon and a marker to each member of the family.

“Tonight we’re going to learn about letting go of hurt feelings,” Mom said. “I want each of you to write on your balloon things that others have done that hurt your feelings. Write down anything that is keeping you from feeling love for someone.”

After thinking for a minute, Dad began writing. Mom helped Jack write on his balloon, and then began working on her own.

Emily wrote things that were easy for her to forgive: Jack jumping on her bed, Gina losing her favorite pen. Then Emily paused. There was one thing that seemed too hard to forgive. Could she really forgive Jenny and still be her friend? Emily thought about the words of the song they had just sung: “Help me, dear Father, to freely forgive, all who may seem unkind to me.”

Emily sat quietly for a moment. Then she slowly wrote on her balloon, “Jenny didn’t invite me to her party.”

When everyone had finished, Mom said, “Now let’s say a prayer in our hearts asking Heavenly Father to help us forgive the people who have hurt our feelings. Let’s also ask Him to forgive us for things we have done that hurt others.”

As Emily finished her prayer, a feeling of warmth washed over her.

Emily smiled as they all let go of their balloons. The balloons drifted upward and bounced gently against the ceiling. Emily laughed and joked with her family as they shared a dessert and cleaned up together.

That night, as Emily climbed into bed, Mom and Dad sat down next to her. She smiled up at her parents.

“It looks like you’re feeling better,” Dad said.

“I feel good,” Emily said. “I’m still sad that I won’t be at the party with all of my friends, but I’m not angry at Jenny anymore. I know that Heavenly Father loves her just like He loves me, even though we both sometimes do things that hurt others. I think forgiveness is Heavenly Father’s way of helping us learn to love each other the way He loves us.” ●

“A spirit of forgiveness and an attitude of love and compassion toward those who may have wronged us is of the very essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”¹

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008)



*Children’s Songbook, 99.

