

# Forgetting the Notes



BY LENA HARPER

(Based on a true story)

*Let your hearts be comforted; for all things shall work together for good to them that walk uprightly* (D&C 100:15).

Ashley pulled her stuffed-animal elephant to her chest and closed her eyes. She pictured the notes of her song, “The Elephant and the Flea,” just as they were on her music. She took a deep breath, opened her eyes, and smiled. Her turn was next, and she was sure she would remember the music she had so carefully memorized.

This was her first piano recital, and Ashley was nervous. The small room was packed with people, and she hardly knew any of them. But her mom was there, and her piano teacher, Miss Stewart, sat smiling at the front of the room near the piano. The students had been asked to dress to represent their songs, so Ashley carried a stuffed-animal elephant with a flea on its nose.

A little boy finished his song and stood up. He bowed while everyone clapped loudly. He did well. He didn't forget any notes in his song.

Ashley swallowed. What if she messed up? Would they still clap for her? What would her mom and her piano teacher think?

Mom reached over and put her hand on Ashley's back. “It's your turn,” she whispered. Then she saw the nervous look on Ashley's face and added, “You'll do fine.”

Ashley stood up and started to picture the notes in her head one last time. Then she walked slowly to the front of the room.

After announcing her name and the title of her song, she placed the elephant on the edge of the bench, sat down next to it, and stared at the piano keys. She knew she could remember the notes. She had practiced so hard; she had to remember. She started playing. Her fingers danced across the keys as she made it through the first part of the song perfectly. Then she got to the second part. This part had always been tricky. Ashley tried to play the right notes, but her fingers and her brain forgot what came next.

Everyone watched her sit silently at the piano. How could this be happening? Miss Stewart searched through a pile of music and pulled out Ashley's piece. She stood up and began walking toward Ashley. How embarrassing if she had to use the actual written music when she was supposed to have it memorized! Just before Miss Stewart could put the music on the piano, Ashley started playing again. Instead of starting where she had stopped, she skipped the middle part and began to play the short ending, which she remembered.

Embarrassed, Ashley finished the song and hurried back to her seat. She didn't bow, and she didn't look at anyone. The audience clapped, but Ashley was sure it wasn't as loud or as long as it had been for the little boy before her.

“You have not failed as long as you have tried.”<sup>2</sup>

**President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008)**



“It's OK,” her mom said. She put her arm around Ashley and kissed the top of her head. “You did so well.”

But Ashley knew she hadn't done well at all.

When the recital was over, Ashley walked quickly toward the door. She couldn't stand the embarrassment. A lady stepped in front of the door, stopping her from escaping.

“You did so well up there. I just love that you can play the piano at such a young age,” she said.

A man joined in. “I really liked your song,” he said.

More people walked by and smiled or patted Ashley on the back. Then Miss Stewart put her arm around Ashley's shoulder. “You did a wonderful job,” she said. She smiled, then moved on to talk to some other piano students.

Ashley felt much better on the ride home. She had messed up, but that didn't matter so much anymore. Everyone seemed to understand. Ashley had tried her best, and that was enough. ●

I didn't win the class art contest—again.



Cool picture! I know a place where that will look great!