

# Music for a Better Day

**By David Dickson**  
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(Based on a true story)

Elizabeth kicked an empty coconut shell down the dirt road. She frowned as it rolled away. Today had not been a good day.

Not at all!

Lagi said something mean to her at school. Later, the other kids laughed when she did a math problem wrong in front of the class. And then her art project got ruined.

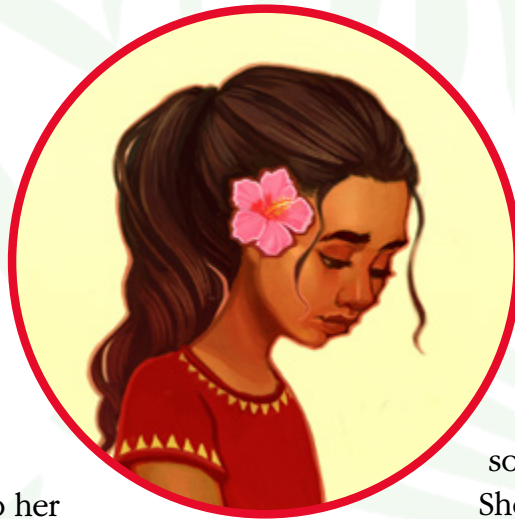
"It's not fair!" Elizabeth said. Who invented bad days anyway?

Elizabeth plucked a pretty hibiscus flower. At least that was one good thing today. Even on a bad day in Samoa she could find beautiful flowers all over.

She twisted the pink flower into her hair and walked home.

"*Talofa!*" Dad said. "How was your day?"

Elizabeth looked down. "Not good." She walked past the noisy pigs in their yard and sat



next to Dad on the porch.

Dad sat and listened as she told him all about her hard day.

"I'm so sorry," Dad said, hugging her. "I've had days like those. Want to know something that helps me?" She nodded. "Yes, please!"

He started singing a song that Elizabeth knew well. Dad sang this beautiful love song to Mom all the time.

She laughed and pushed on his shoulder. "Daa-aad!"

He grinned. "I'm serious! Good music helps me feel better. And, speaking of music . . ."

Elizabeth knew what he was going to say. It was time to practice piano.

More than anything, Elizabeth wanted to learn piano so she could play songs in church. She already loved singing with her family. Especially with Dad. But playing piano was harder. Her fingers had to work to find the notes.

“I don’t know if I feel like practicing today,” she said.

Dad stood. “Try to think about what you’re playing. Hymns can help us feel closer to God.”

Then he took off his sandals and went inside to help with dinner.

Elizabeth took off her sandals and went inside too. Dad chopped vegetables while Mom stirred the stew.

The sheet music for “Fa’afetai i Le Atua” sat on the keyboard. Elizabeth loved this Samoan hymn. It was all about giving thanks to God.

Elizabeth turned on the electric keyboard and started playing. “Think about what you’re playing,” Dad had said.



So she did. She thought about all the things she was thankful for. Her family. Her house. Music. Beautiful Samoa.

Her fingers started to find the notes more easily. After a while, her feelings began to change. She felt peace. Elizabeth smiled. She was feeling the Holy Ghost!

The sound of chopping stopped. Dad started humming. He stood next to her and began to sing.

She kept playing, and Mom joined in too. Elizabeth kept thinking about all the ways God blessed her and her family.

At the end, Dad leaned down and asked, “Feeling any better?”

“Yes!” she said. “You were right. Good music *did* make my day better!” ●



What helps you feel better on hard days?