

In the middle of a stage stood a grand piano, illuminated by a single spotlight. Playing peacefully alone was an old man. His pale, bony fingers danced delicately across the ivory keys. As he did so, the calm melody reminded him of his wife. The wife he had lost too soon.

Without a moment's hesitation, she was there: sat beside him. With every note he played, she responded. His hand was taken by hers as she reminded him of their special song. They sat shoulder to shoulder and he felt her warmth on his cheek. Then slowly, she drifted away as his thoughts changed to someone else. Another, who was taken too soon.

He thought back to that fateful day, when he was an army medic, all dressed in green. He gave his friend the nod but the time wasn't right. His close companion was shot. He cradled him as he drew his final breath. Why couldn't he help? That was his job. As grief struck his heart, he looked at the sky for answers: there were none.

As the melody continued, his eyes lowered and he thought about all the people who were no more; he had lost parts of himself in the process. He knew he had to think about the present.

The present. The best present a child could ever have asked for. The box was encased by a large, blue bow; he opened it gently, knowing something precious was inside. He was right. There stood a hand-crafted hobby horse, made by his grandfather. Carefully, he removed it and cantered around the room like a jockey.

As if it were planned, a young boy came into the room with the piano - snapping him out of his daze. It was his grandson on that exact same horse. He was back, facing the current reality.

Placing the hobby horse at the foot of the piano stool, the little boy clambered beside his grandfather. Staring up at him, the old man was struck by a thought. He realised at that moment what was important. Although the past would always be with him, it was the love of his family and hope for the future that would keep him going.

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