

## The Keys of Hope

For a brief period of my childhood, I lived with my mother, aunt, grandmother and grandfather. I wouldn't say it wasn't perfection. It was one of the happiest moments I can deeply remember. Canada was where my mother and I started a part of our lives. The snow was as white as I pictured it would be and the air was as crisp and uncomfortable just like everyone complained about, nipping at every inch of exposed skin I had. I'd run back into the house and cuddle up with my grandfather on the couch as I slowly watched my grandmother forget who I was. Hell, I watched as she slowly started to forget all of us.

It was difficult for us to watch the transition take place, but after several months of watching, there wasn't much we could do anymore. It was time to take her to a place everyone dreads of being put in, a nursing home. She'd stare at us as if we were here to make her bed, as if we worked at the nursing home. It saddened my mom very much.

It was a lot to take in every time we visited her. We needed some time to ourselves back at home. One afternoon my grandfather came home with an amazing surprise. He brought home the most elegant black piano you'd ever see. I couldn't take my big blue eyes off of it. At that very moment, I had wished I knew how to play the piano so that I could play on that one. I asked my grandfather if he knew how to play but he had not a clue.

That's when my cousin Sandrine visited us. She was a prodigy when it came to playing piano. Sandrine took me down to the basement where the magnificent piano stayed to teach me how to play. She stayed with us at the house for several months. Not that it bothered me at all. I loved Sandrine so much. Not only was she my cousin, she was my best friend.

For the several months she lived with us, she taught me how to play piano. Weeks went by and I learned at a very fast pace. Soon enough playing piano became something I did on a daily basis. It kept my grandmother off my mind and brought me peace and tranquility. I was passionate about it and never felt the urge to stop at any time. A month before Sandrine was supposed to leave to go back to college; I had learned over 15 songs by heart and knew the basics to playing piano. One night I played for the family.

My mom observed as my long, skinny fingers delicately pressed each key to make a new sound. My grandfather was amazed to see me find something I was completely devoted to. I knew if my grandmother were still around she would be so proud of me. My mother was stunned as to how beautifully I played and she shed tears of joy. I hadn't seen her so happy in a long time. Those were the tears I was looking for all along.