



April Fool

[story by Katherine Battersby](#), illustrated by David Legge

LIFE INSIDE A piano's not so bad.

Sure, it's small, but some would say it's cosy. If I were a real estate agent, I'd say: it's a unique compact space, with lovely wooden floorboards and decorative ceilings. A fixer-upper. Heaps of potential.

There are some bonuses to being cramped. I've got to know myself a lot better in here. And I don't just mean that wishy-washy emotional stuff either, but important things. Like the fact that I have twenty-three hairs on my left foot, but only seventeen on my right. Weird. And there's a freckle the shape of a hamburger on my knee—but maybe I'm just hungry.

Having my own place is great. Sure, Mum might miss me, but she'll get over it. My sister will go on to do great things. Might even become a hairdresser or something. They'll put a plaque in my room: **TOBY—Loved a good joke. Missed by all.**

You hear all sorts of strange things from inside a piano. You can still hear Mrs Pumpernickel screaming. But I also heard Yasmin tell Ben that she liked him. And I heard Ben tell Yasmin that she's got funny feathery hair. Then I heard Yasmin crying.

I think Ben's an idiot. I banged the keys around a bit, just to scare him.

It's not all sunny skies, though. There is one teensy problem with my new home. No-one's into playing 'Mary had a little lamb' anymore. No; Mrs Pumpernickel likes to teach complicated pieces, like Pachelbel's 'Canon' and Joplin's 'The Entertainer'. Pieces that use every key on the piano. Great acoustics in here, but the hammer thingies keep clacking along my ribs like I'm a xylophone.

I only wish I wasn't stuck here for the best day of the year: a day my mum calls Toby's Trickster Tirade. April 1st is my time to shine. I had big things planned. But Mrs Pumpernickel just doesn't understand my genius.

On the upside, no-one knows I'm here, so I have plenty of time to myself. I've thought up all sorts of new practical jokes—real crackers. And I've always wanted a spider for a pet. Mum would never let me have one, but now I have at least five. As far as roommates go, they're a little hairier than I might have hoped for, but they don't whinge as much as my sister.

All in all, I'm pretty happy. Life inside a piano's really not so bad. I think I'll stay here. For a while anyway. Until I can grow a beard. Or maybe just until high school. Well, at least until Mrs Pumpernickel calms down about the frog I put in her tuba.