

# THE STOLEN SODA

By Susan Denney  
(Based on a true story)

*"Dare to do right! Dare to be true!"*  
(Children's Songbook, 158)

Annette was excited when she got a part in the musical her city's community theater was putting on. She sang in two numbers and had lines to memorize! The rehearsals had taken up a lot of her summer, but Annette didn't mind because everything about being in a play was fun.

There were three other children in the play—two girls and a boy. Because they were in only three scenes, she and the other children had lots of time to explore the theater while they weren't rehearsing. They looked in prop rooms and costume rooms and watched people building and painting sets. Heather, who was the oldest, had been in plays before, and she knew her way around backstage.

On the night before the play opened, Heather said to Annette, "Come see what I have!"

Annette followed her. She couldn't wait to see what Heather would show her.

"Look, someone put free sodas here for us," Heather said, showing her a small refrigerator in a room that looked like an office.

In the refrigerator were some bottles of Annette's favorite soda. She was really thirsty, and the drinks looked delicious.

"Go ahead, take one," Heather said.

"I don't know . . ." Annette said. She just wasn't sure about this.

"It's OK. They mean for us to take them. I've come here before to get one. No one said anything."

So Annette decided it must be OK. She opened a bottle of soda and took a big drink. It tasted wonderful.

"Let's go finish these in the restroom," Heather said.

That seemed strange to Annette. But Heather was older, so Annette followed her to the restroom stalls to drink their sodas.

When Annette realized that they were hiding, she began to wonder if they were doing something wrong.

Were they not supposed to take the sodas? She began to worry. After the dress rehearsal was over, even the applause couldn't get rid of the sick feeling in her stomach.

The next day Annette wasn't excited about going back for opening night. All the way to the theater, she

thought about the soda she had taken. Before she got out of the car, she told her mom about what happened.

"Do you think they really were for us?" Annette asked. She hoped her mother would say yes so she could feel better again.

"How do you feel about it?" Mom asked.

"I feel terrible."

"That's the Holy Ghost telling you that you did something wrong."

"But I can't put the soda back! What do I do now?" Annette asked.

"Well, you can pray and ask for forgiveness. After the performance you can show me where you found the drinks, and I'll find out who they belonged to.

Then you can pay for the drink with your allowance."

Annette bowed her head right then and said a silent prayer. In her prayer she said she was sorry she had taken something that didn't belong to her. After the prayer she felt better.

"I'm very proud of you, Annette," Mom said.

"You are?"

"Yes. Even though Heather told you it was the right thing to do, you listened to the Holy Ghost telling you that it wasn't. We all make mistakes. But learning how to repent is an important part of growing up. Now, go break a leg."

Annette laughed. "Break a leg" is what people in the theater say to wish someone good luck.

"I will," Annette said as she waved goodbye to her mom. While she put on her makeup and costume, she felt happy. She had learned a lot more than how to be a good actress this summer. ♦

The author lives in Pennsylvania, USA.

