

-ENDINGS-

August 28, 2009. Present Day.

“Is that your friend on TV, *baba*?”

He glanced up from the game they were playing to look at the news report flashing on the TV screen. He caught a glimpse of Sebastin’s face before it disappeared. It never ceased to astound him that his son, Adam, only six years old, could play checkers so well while paying such close attention to all that was going on around him.

“How do you know about him, Adam?”

“I heard you talking to *ummi* yesterday,” Adam replied with a mischievous grin. “You said you were going to see him.”

“You’re too clever, Adam. Yes, Sebastin was my very good friend. He answered our prayers.”

“What did he do?”

“He found our lost brothers. He found 5,000 of our lost brothers,” he responded. As he said the number aloud for the first time, he was overwhelmed again with his good fortune.

“Were they *really* lost?” Adam questioned with sincere concern.

He smiled as he reached over to Adam and pulled him into his arms. “Yes. They were *really* lost. They were so lost that they did not even know how lost they were. Can you imagine that?” With a flourish of his hand and a warm smile for his son, he said, “Now we can find them again.”

But Adam still looked worried. At six, worry was not hard to see; the child’s brow furrowed deeply and his face became unmistakably sad. “The TV says that he died today.”

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He looked proudly at his son. He was always listening, always absorbing.

Adam stared down at his hands in his lap, and picked at his fingernails, a habit since birth. “Are you sad, *baba*?”

“Why, Adam? Why would that make me sad? It is God’s will. Why would I be sad that God has decided that it be so.” It pained him a great deal to use the word “God” with his son; everyone in his family had questioned his decision. But he had made it, and so it stood. He, too, would have liked to call God by His proper name, but it would be easier for Adam to grow up in America this way.

“*Baba*, did he know he was going to die?”

Thinking back to less than twelve hours earlier, concentrating on the still vivid memories of the few minutes in which the inevitability of his actions must have been apparent to Sebastin as well, he replied, “I believe he did, Adam.”

“I thought so.”

It amazed him how his son could say such things. “Now, let’s turn off the TV and finish playing,” he said as he freed Adam from his arms. “You are growing older, Adam. You know so much. This time, take care. I may not let you win.”