

# *Stories*

By  
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## Introduction—*Islamic Rose* Family and Friends

**Rose**—Leader of Hijab-Ez, ten-year-old only child, Christian background, mixed ethnicity, USA.

**Camelia**—Member of Hijab-Ez, ten-year-old only child, Muslim, Egyptian-American, USA.

**Ruby**—Member of Hijab-Ez, eleven-year-old only child, Protestant Christian, Vietnamese National

**Christina**—Member of Hijab-Ez, ten-year-old with 4 siblings, Catholic Christian, Hispanic-American, USA.

**Grandma (Linda)**—Rose's grandma, police officer, avid gardener, loves crafts, searching for truth about God, doesn't claim any religious affiliation, believes in God but not the Trinity, mixed ethnicity, USA.

**Grandpa (Ray)**—Rose's grandpa, retired police officer, works evenings in security, Catholic Christian, Hispanic-American, USA.

**Dad (Tony)**—Rose's father, single parent, lives next door to Rose's grandparents, Catholic Christian, mixed ethnicity, USA.

**Fahd**—Saudi Arabian police officer, lives at Grandma’s home for one year, Muslim, kind and smiles a lot, great story teller

**Abdul**—Saudi Arabian police officer, lives at Grandma’s home for one year, Muslim, loves books and astronomy

**Sylvia**—Grandma and Rose’s friend, owner of The Phoenician Restaurant, married to an Arab Muslim, mixed ethnicity, USA.

**Judy**—Camelia’s mother, Muslim revert born in USA, loves jewelry, co-owner of Casa Camelia Restaurant, married to an Egyptian, USA.

**Kendall**—Rose’s six-year-old cousin, Hispanic-American, Catholic Christian parents, USA.

**Definition: Hijab-Ez** (pronounced ‘hijab-ease’) is a word Rose made up to identify the group of Muslim and non-Muslim friends who joined together to support her hijab-wearing school friend, Camelia. A member of the Hijab-Ez is a girl who wears a head covering regardless of her religious beliefs.

## Prologue

Fahd and Abdul are Saudi Arabian police officers who came to the USA for one year and are staying at Grandma's house. They have successfully completed a six-month English course and will soon begin six months of police academy training. They have been sharing their culture and Islamic values with Rose, her family, and her friends.

Ten-year-old Rose and her three friends are known at their public school as the Hijab-Ez because Rose, Ruby, and Christina wear headscarves each day to school to support their friend Camelia, who is a Muslim. During the first semester of their fifth grade year, the four girls have become loyal friends. They have met and overcome many challenges, and their friendship has been tested. The diversity of their religious beliefs and ethnic backgrounds has united the four girls not divided them. During the second semester of the school year, the Hijab-Ez will face many new challenges at school and with their families. The wisdom in the Islamic stories they hear from Fahd and Abdul and life-experience stories from family members may help them overcome problems and make good decisions.

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*Christina noticed Camelia twisting the paper and asked, "Why are you twisting that paper, Camelia? It looks like you are trying to be a human shredding machine!" No one laughed at Christina's attempt to lighten the mood around the table with her little joke.*

*Ruby couldn't stand it anymore. She grabbed the crumpled paper from Camelia and began smoothing out the wrinkles. Christina thought, "Oh boy! There is something seriously wrong happening here! Camelia didn't protest when Ruby grabbed the paper from her hands."*

*Rose suddenly slammed her hands down on the table and muttered loudly, "It's not fair!"*

*"What's not fair?" Christina squeaked nervously as she looked at a now angry-faced Rose.*

*"I'm so mad I could bite nails!" Ruby nearly shouted in an angry voice. Her three friends looked at Ruby with shocked expressions on their faces. Ruby almost never raised her voice and never, ever got mad!*

*"Shish," whispered Camelia. "Everyone is looking at us!"*

*Ruby's face reddened and she whispered back, "Well, Rose is right. It's not fair!"*

## Chapter 1—Three Special Stories

Rose burst into the family room where Grandma, Fahd, and Abdul were sitting and talking about next week’s firearms training assignment. “It’s not fair! They are just being mean! I don’t want to go to that Sunday school class ever again!” Rose nearly shouted as she flung herself into Grandpa’s recliner and began to bawl like a newborn baby.

Grandma, Fahd, and Abdul were momentarily shocked into silence. Rose had ridden to her Sunday school class with their neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Gleason. When she left, she was cheerful and smiling, even though Grandpa could not take her today because he had to go to work.

Grandma seemed to recover first. She went to Rose and said calmly, “Rose, please calm down and tell us what has happened. We can’t help you if we don’t know what the problem is.”

Through her sobs, Rose recounted what had happened that morning. “The boys and girls are going on an overnight camping trip, and mothers are going with the girls, and fathers with the boys. They are going to visit Colossal Cave Park. The boys are going one day, and the girls are going another day. I can’t go because I don’t have a mom to go with me. I asked if it was okay for my dad to come with me, and the teacher said no!”

“Can I go with you, Rose?” Grandma asked.

“The teacher suggested I bring my grandmother, but I told her my dad is also my mom and he should be the one to come with me. She said she was sorry, but my dad couldn’t go with me. None of the other girls is having a grandma go with them. Then that girl, Mary Higgins, made fun of me and said I must be an orphan. The other kids laughed and asked me why I

didn't have a mom. One kid even asked if my mom was dead! I didn't know what to say to them. Even the teacher asked me where my mother was!"

"Maybe they were just curious or trying to be helpful?" Grandma suggested.

"I think they were just nosey, and, if they wanted to help me, why did some of the kids laugh? Most of the kids already know I don't have a mom. They treat me different, like they never ask me to go to their houses after class or anything. I know when somebody is making fun of me, Grandma."

Fahd and Abdul looked at Rose with concern mirrored on their faces, but waited to see what Grandma would say to Rose.

"If you really want to go on this trip, I think I can get off work and go with you." Grandma offered again.

"I don't want to go if my dad can't go. What I don't understand is why they called me an orphan. Besides, being an orphan doesn't make a person bad, does it?" Rose questioned.

"Of course it doesn't, and you are not an orphan. You have your dad who loves you very much," replied Grandma in her no nonsense tone of voice.

Grandma handed Rose a Kleenex and suggested, "Why not go wash your face. It will make you feel a little better, and then we can talk some more."

Rose nodded her head and left the family room to do as Grandma suggested. While Rose was temporarily away from the family room, Grandma quickly explained to Fahd and Abdul why Rose was so upset.

“But, Mum, Rose is not an orphan. She has her father, you, and her grandfather. It was most unkind for the other children to laugh at Rose,” Fahd said disapprovingly. Grandma could tell he was upset because Rose’s feelings had been hurt.

Abdul said carefully, “I do not know what to say to Rose about this class. I think we should try to make her not feel so sad. Fahd, you like to tell stories, and Rose loves to hear them. You must tell her your story about the ‘Unlettered Man.’ He was indeed an orphan, but grew up to be a great trader in Arabia, and later Allah chose him to be the Last Prophet.”

A look of relief crossed Grandma’s face as she nodded her head and smiled at Abdul. “That is an excellent suggestion. Thank you, Abdul.”

Fahd nodded his head in agreement just as Rose walked back into the family room. Rose gave everyone a wan smile as she settled back into Grandpa’s recliner and gave a big sigh.

Fahd smiled at Rose and said, “Remember when I promised I would tell you a story about one of the greatest traders in Saudi Arabia? It was right before the day of the bazaar, when you and your Hijab-Ez friends sold your crafts to raise money for the new Islamic school.”

Rose’s ears perked up when she heard the word “story.” She straightened up in her chair and turned her attention to Fahd. Rose nodded her head, pushed her long bangs from her face, and said in a quavering voice, “I remember.”

“This great trader was an orphan!” Fahd said dramatically. “Would you like for me to tell you how he became an orphan and then grew up to be the great trader? I call this great trader ‘the Unlettered Man.’”

Rose was hooked. Gone were the sighs and frowns. Rose's sad expression changed to one of animation, and she replied with enthusiasm, "I want to hear the story, Fahd."

*Thank goodness. I think the worst of the storm is over!* Grandma thought as she watched Rose's attention move beyond the morning's events and focus on listening to Fahd's story.

Fahd began his story with, "The Story of the Unlettered Man. About one thousand five hundred years ago in the Arabian lands lived a tribe called..."

Abdul interrupted, "Wait, Fahd. I think you should start the story before this; maybe start with the family background of this great trader."

Fahd frowned at Abdul. He hated when anyone interrupted his storytelling, except for Rose and his little sister back home in Saudi Arabia. "That will make the story very long," Fahd argued good-naturedly.

"Rose won't get to hear about the Cloud Miracle or about the miracle of the lost ZamZam Well being found," countered Abdul. Abdul could be just a little stubborn at times.

"Oh, I want to hear about the miracles, too!" exclaimed Rose.

Fahd looked at Rose's face. Her eyes were gleaming with excitement. "I would not want to disappoint our young Rose, so I will begin again."

Rose clapped her hands, and Grandma gave her "that look." Rose quickly folded her hands in her lap and pretended to zip her lips closed.

Fahd cleared his throat and began again. "A couple of thousand years have passed since Allah gave the ZamZam Well to Hajar and Isma'il. Many Arabs are now traveling to Mecca to put wooden and stone idols in the Ka'bah that Prophet Abraham and Isma'il built to thank

Allah. The people hardly remember Allah. The ZamZam Well is covered over and no one knows where it is. They have to bring fresh water to the city of Mecca by camel.

“There was a man named *Abdul Muttalib* living in Mecca. He was very poor and belonged to the *Banu Hashim* clan of the *Quraysh* tribe. He hadn’t forgotten Allah and he spent his time digging all over the city of Mecca looking for the ZamZam Well. One day, he said a prayer to Allah and asked for help to find the well. Abdul promised if Allah helped him and also gave him ten sons, he would sacrifice one of his sons in thanks.

“Allah guided him to the place of the ZamZam Well, and, in time, Abdul had ten sons. His youngest son was named *Abdullah*, and everyone loved him. Abdul knew he had to keep his promise to Allah, but was very unhappy, as he did not want to sacrifice Abdullah. Many of the people heard about Abdul’s oath to Allah, and they suggested he go see an old woman for advice. She told him to write the words ‘Abdullah’ and ‘ten camels’ on lots (like a piece of paper) and put the lots in a container. Abdul drew Abdullah’s name ten times before he finally drew the lot with the words ‘ten camels.’ The old woman told Abdul this meant he was to sacrifice one hundred camels to Allah. Abdul was very happy and thanked Allah for not requiring him to sacrifice his son.

“Abdullah grew up and was known to be a good and honest man. When he was twenty years old, he married Aminah, who was from the *Banu Zabra* clan that lived in Mecca. Abdullah decided to go on a business trip to *Ash-Sham*, which means Syria. Aminah did not want him to leave her because she was going to have a baby. Abdullah brought Aminah an African servant woman named *Barakah* to help her while he was away on his trip.

“A terrible tragedy happened to Abdullah. On his way home he got very sick and died. Aminah was very sad, but her father-in-law, Abdul Muttalib, took care of Aminah after his son died. One night, before her baby was born, Aminah had a dream and heard a voice tell her to name her baby Muhammad when he was born. Muhammad means ‘Highly Praised.’ When Aminah had her baby boy it was the year 570.”

“Oh, Fahd,” cried Rose with tears in her eyes. “The poor little baby doesn’t have a father!” Grandma looked a little teary-eyed, too. Fahd quickly told Rose not to worry because the story would have many happy parts.

“When Muhammad was six years old, he and his mother traveled to the city of *Yathrib*, which is known today as *Medina*. Muhammad’s father was buried in Yathrib, and Aminah wanted to visit his grave. Every day, his mother went to the grave and cried so much that she became ill. When they traveled back home, she got sick and knew she would die very soon. Aminah asked her friend and servant, Barakah, to promise to love and care for young Muhammad. Barakah promised and said she would never leave Muhammad.”

Rose gasped when she heard this. “Poor little boy! Now he doesn’t have a mom or a dad!”

Grandma patted Rose’s knee and reached for a Kleenex. “Please don’t interrupt Fahd again, Rose,” Grandma quietly pleaded. Rose nodded her head and accepted a Kleenex from Grandma.

Fahd nodded to Grandma and continued with the story. “Poor Barakah! She had to dig the grave and bury Muhammad’s mother before she and Muhammad returned to the grandfather with the sad news. Now little Muhammad was an orphan.”

“This story is so sad,” said Rose. “Does it get better for little Muhammad?”

“You are perhaps sad because you also lost your mother, young Rose?” said Abdul.

“Yes, but I still have my dad,” Rose murmured through her sniffles. Abdul smiled encouragingly to Rose, and she smiled back.

Fahd continued, “Muhammad lived with his grandfather for four years, and then his grandfather became ill and died. Barakah and Muhammad went to live with his uncle, *Abu Talib*. Abu Talib had already promised the grandfather he would raise Muhammad as though he were his own son.

“When Muhammad was twelve years old, his uncle decided to go on a business trip to Syria. His uncle was a trader and decided to take many camels on the trip. Muhammad asked to go with his uncle. After Muhammad had asked several times, his uncle finally agreed. Muhammad was given the job of taking care of the camels each evening when the caravan rested.

“After traveling about two weeks, the caravan approached a small town. Just outside this town was a Christian monastery where a monk named *Bahira* lived. Bahira noticed a dark cloud following above and providing shade for the caravan.”

“I know what is special about the cloud!” said Rose in an excited voice.

“So, Little Sister, what is so special about this dark cloud?” inquired Abdul.

“God put the cloud there,” said Rose with a big grin.

“Our Little Rose is very wise,” said Fahd. “It is true. Allah has caused clouds to make constant shade over every Prophet.” Rose nodded her head as if she already knew this.

Fahd continued, “Bahira wanted to meet everyone in the caravan, so he invited them to have supper with him. Bahira looked at everyone and was disappointed. He knew someone was missing. He asked Abu Talib if there was anyone else in his caravan, and Abu Talib sent for Muhammad. When Bahira saw Muhammad, he was excited, happy, and spent all evening talking to Muhammad. He later told Abu Talib that Muhammad was the Last Prophet chosen by Allah, and Muhammad was a very special person!”

“Wow!” The word just slipped out of Rose’s mouth before she could stop it. She clamped her hand over her mouth and looked sheepishly at Grandma. “Sorry.”

Fahd waited a moment after Rose’s unusual comment before continuing with his story. “When Muhammad was a teenager, he went to a meeting at the house of a man named *Abdullah ibn Jud’an*. The people at the meeting wanted to form a charity to help care for all the poor in Mecca. At the meeting, the people made a special pledge promising to help the poor and needy, assist the oppressed, protect the weak, secure the rights of people, and help establish peace and harmony among people. Muhammad made this pledge and he practiced it all his life. When he grew to be a young man, many people began calling him *As-Sadiq*, which means ‘Truthful One.’

“As a young man, Muhammad worked for his uncle as a shepherd and he spent many nights gazing at the stars and moon in the sky. He wondered about Allah and decided he didn’t believe that the idols were gods. He saw people make the idols with their own hands. Instead Muhammad wanted to know more about Allah.”

Fahd paused to clear his throat, and Abdul took the opportunity to ask Rose, “Did you know that every Prophet has been a shepherd when he was a young man or boy?”

“No, I didn’t know that, but I know Prophet David was a shepherd.”

Fahd looked sternly at Abdul and sighed in exasperation at another interruption. “No more talking or I will never finish my story!”

Abdul and Rose traded small smiles and then said contritely to Fahd, “Sorry.”

“Now back to my story. Muhammad never had the opportunity to go to school so he didn’t know how to read or write. This is why I called him ‘the Unlettered Man.’ Back in the days of Arabia, most people did not go to school. They did not have schools like we have today in Saudi Arabia and like you have in your country, Rose.

“As Muhammad grew older, he decided to learn to be a trader. His uncle gave him some items for trading, and Muhammad took them to the bazaar in the city. He liked seeing all the different people and wonderful goods that came from far away places. He was a good trader and earned the reputation of being kind, fair, and well-mannered. He never cheated anyone and he always made a profit. People began to call him *Al-Ameen*, which means ‘The Trustworthy.’”

Fahd paused and heard Abdul whisper to Rose, “You and the Hijab-Ez are good traders.”

“We had so much fun at the masjid bazaar. I hope we can make crafts to sell at the next one,” Rose whispered back.

Grandma, who had been very quiet and attentive while listening to Fahd, suddenly said, “I think the Muslims at Camelia’s masjid will be very happy if the Hijab-Ez help again. All of your profits were donated to help build the new Islamic school.”

Fahd smiled and thought to himself, *Telling stories here in this country is very different from telling stories with my family, but Rose is so eager to learn, and I don’t really mind when she interrupts me!* “I

think I will finish my story another time. Maybe Rose and Grandma have some other things they want to do?” Fahd said teasingly.

“Please, please, finish the story Fahd,” pleaded Rose. “I want to find out what Muhammad does next.”

Grandma laughed and said, “Maybe Fahd will finish his story if all of us stop interrupting him!”

Abdul laughed and said, “Fahd would tell stories all day and all night. He is just teasing you, Little Sister.”

Fahd grinned at Rose and once again resumed his story. “When Muhammad was about twenty-five years old, he wanted to marry, but he was too poor. His uncle, Abu Talib, wanted to help him so Abu Talib went to visit a very rich widow named Khadijah. She owned many caravans. Abu Talib persuaded her to allow Muhammad to be the leader of her next caravan. Khadijah promised she would pay Muhammad very well if he did a good job.

“Khadijah didn’t know Muhammad, so she had her trusted servant, *Maysara*, go with the caravan to watch Muhammad. Muhammad went to many towns and sold all the items for very good prices. The servant was very impressed at how fair and honest Muhammad was in his dealings with people.

“When all the trading was finished, Muhammad began the journey back to Mecca. Maysara suggested that Muhammad ride ahead and make a report to Khadijah on how well the caravan had done. This would permit Khadijah the chance to meet Muhammad.

“Khadijah met with Muhammad and decided she liked and admired him because he was honest and he had excellent manners. Days after this meeting, she began to miss him and she

told a friend, *Nafisa*, she would like to marry Muhammad. She was forty years old and a widow, and Muhammad was only twenty-five years old, so she thought he would not want to marry her.

“Nafisa decided to tell Muhammad about Khadijah wanting to marry him and her worries he wouldn’t want to marry her because she was older and a widow.

“Muhammad listened to Nafisa and said he was too poor to get married. Nafisa asked him, ‘If money did not matter would you want to marry Khadijah?’ Muhammad said he would. For the next three months, Khadijah and Muhammad thought about getting married to each other and finally decided to get married. They were very happy in their marriage.”

Fahd paused momentarily and then said, “I am going to stop my story here, Little Sister. It is getting late, and your dad will want you home soon. Another time, I will finish my story. I will tell you how Muhammad was called by Allah to tell others about Islam.”

“You won’t forget to finish your story will you?” asked Rose.

“No, Little Rose, I will not forget,” said Fahd.

“This story is about a real orphan, but he still had extended family to take care of him and help him,” Grandma said to Rose.

“Yes...he had his grandfather and then his uncle and the friend of his mother, who always stayed with him, too!” Rose added. “I like this story.”

“Remember, he grew up to be very successful as a trader and he found a very good wife. This tells us that orphans are good people and can have happy lives,” Abdul added.

Rose nodded her head and smiled at her two older Saudi brothers.

As if on cue, the telephone rang, and Grandma went to answer it. She returned to the family room and said to Rose, “Your dad just got home from work and he wants you to go home. Do you want me to talk to him about the field trip and what happened at Sunday school today?”

“Thanks, Grandma, but I think I will tell him what happened. I need to ask him some questions about my mom,” replied Rose.

Rose hugged Grandma, Fahd, and Abdul, and thanked Fahd for his story before leaving for home.

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“Dad, I’m home,” Rose called out as she walked through the kitchen of the house.

“I’m in the sunroom,” Dad called back.

Rose walked slowly down the hallway towards the guest bedroom, which led to the sunroom. Dad called it the sunroom because it was added to the house after the house was originally built. All three walls and the double doors leading out to the backyard were made of windows. Dad had blinds installed to provide shade from the bright Arizona sun.

Rose loved the hallway. Dad had hung framed pictures of Rose since she was a baby on the walls. The framed photographs lined both sides of the hall. Rose often laughed at some of the pictures showing her doing silly things. One of her favorite pictures was when she was a baby sitting in a highchair with Grandpa trying to feed her oatmeal. Grandma took the picture when Rose spit the oatmeal out, and it landed on Grandpa’s face!

“How was your day?” Dad asked with a smile for his best girl.

“It started off pretty good, and then I got upset and mad at Sunday school. I told Grandma about everything, and Fahd told me a story about an orphan and trader, and now I don’t feel so bad. I’m still a little mad because it isn’t fair!” Rose said in a rush.

“Whoa! Why don’t we go sit in the living room and you can explain everything to me?” Dad suggested as he hugged Rose.

Rose nodded and followed her dad to the living room. Rose and her dad sat down on the green, over-stuffed couch, and dad clicked off the television. “Now that we are comfortable, begin with why you are upset, tell me what isn’t fair, and then you can tell me why you are still a little mad,” Dad suggested.

Rose explained what had happened at Sunday school, and, as she finished, she gave a deep sigh. “Dad, I think I was upset with those kids because I didn’t know what to say about my mom. We never talk about her and why she left. I can’t tell people she’s dead, because I don’t know anything about where she is or why she left us.”

Rose’s dad looked at his daughter’s troubled expression and sighed. “I had hoped I wouldn’t have to talk to you about this for a few more years, Rose. I don’t have the answers you are looking for. I can tell you what I do know and what I think. Okay?”

Rose nodded and looked steadily at her dad.

“After you were born, your mother was depressed. The doctor said this was normal for many new mothers because they have to go through many physical and emotional adjustments. Your mom returned to work, but was unhappy all the time. She said she didn’t want to quit work, so I didn’t know what to do about her unhappiness. When you were about six months

old, I came home from work and found the apartment where we were living completely empty. Everything was gone. The neighbor across from us came out of her apartment holding you and your diaper bag. She told me your mother asked her to watch you while we moved to a new apartment. Your mother never returned for you. She didn't leave me a note and she never called."

Rose gulped, but said bravely, "Did you see her at work and ask her why she left and took everything?"

"Rose, your mom quit her job and did not tell anyone at her job what her plans were or where she was going. They were as surprised as I was."

Brushing at the silent tears in her eyes, Rose asked softly, "What did you do, Dad? Did you try to find my mom?"

"Yes, I did. I contacted her sister, but she had not heard from your mom. I went to the police, but I was told your mom left of her own free will and there was nothing they could do about it."

"Her sister?!" Rose practically shrieked. "You never told me my mom had a sister! You never told me you knew any of my mom's relatives!" Rose said in a slightly accusing tone of voice.

"I'm sorry, Rose. You never asked me any questions about your mom before. I guess I was just waiting until you did ask," Rose's dad said.

Dad seemed to be uncomfortable saying this. At least, that is what Rose thought. *I'll ask him about my aunt later. Right now I want to know about my mom.*

"Were you mad at my mom?"

“Yes, Rose. I was hurt and mad. I didn’t know what else to do. I went to your grandma and grandpa, and told them what had happened. They invited me to move into their house for a short time, until we could get this house next door to them. Grandpa retired and began taking care of you because Grandma wasn’t close to retirement time and I needed to work to support us. We went to see a judge, and he gave me custody of you. Your mom did not come to the court to see the judge.”

“But, did she know about the judge?” Rose persisted, hoping her mom maybe didn’t know about the judge.

“Yes, she did. The police finally found her living in Tucson, and gave her papers telling her about the hearing with the judge. I guess she decided not to come to the hearing. Your Grandma found her in Tucson and tried to convince her to get some help for the problems she was having. Grandma paid for your mom to go to a treatment center. Your mom went to the treatment center, but only stayed two weeks. One day, she just walked away and didn’t return. We haven’t heard anything from her since then.”

Rose said, with sad tears rolling down her cheeks, “I am very sad for my mom, but I’m mad at her, too. She didn’t even think about me.”

“I’m sad for her, too, Rose, and I was mad for a very long time. I had to stop being mad, because being mad made me feel sick, and it was keeping me from being happy about having you,” Dad replied heavily and gave Rose a hug. Dad waited patiently while Rose fought to control her tears. Finally, she sighed deeply and used the Kleenex her Dad handed her to blow her nose and dry the remaining tears from her eyes.

“I don’t think I want to tell those kids or the teacher about my mom. What should I say if people ask me about her?”

“Why not just say the truth? Your mom left when you were a baby, and you don’t know why, or where she is,” suggested Dad.

“Okay. I’m not an orphan, either, because I have you!” Rose said with a hint of defiance.

“You have Grandma and Grandpa, your aunts, uncles, and cousins, too. You have lots of family, Rose, and we all love you very much.”

“Fahd told me a story about a real orphan. His dad died, and then his mom. He lived with his grandpa, until his grandpa died when he was only ten years old. Then the boy—his name is Muhammad—went to live with his uncle until he grew up. Even if he was an orphan, he still had lots of family to take care of him. Just like me!” Rose said and smiled for the first time since the conversation began.

“Fahd was very kind to tell you a story that helped you feel a little better.”

“Dad, you know what I noticed about Fahd and Abdul? They never seem to get mad, and they don’t say angry words about people when I tell them about things that upset me.”

Rose’s watched as a look of surprise flickered across her dad’s face. “Dad, Fahd and Abdul always tell me a story when I get upset. I think it is their way to help me understand and think about things that bother me!”

“When I was a young boy and had problems, I would tell Grandma and she would do the same thing. She never really told me what to do. She would tell me a story that helped me to think about things, and often I would learn a lot from the story.”

“Please tell me one of the stories about when you were a boy and had a problem,” Rose pleaded.

Dad scratched his head and thought for a few moments while Rose waited expectantly.

“When I was ten or eleven years old, I loved baseball and wanted to be a famous baseball player. I heard about a new baseball team being started for kids my age and I wanted to join the team. Your grandma was concerned about me having a problem playing baseball because, back then, I had to wear glasses. My glasses had black frames, and the lenses were very, very thick. I used to have a lazy eye.” Before Rose could ask what a lazy eye was, her dad help up his hand to stop Rose’s question.

“A lazy eye is when one or both of your eyes have weak muscles. Your eyes turn inward when you try to focus on things. I had one lazy eye and had to wear the glasses that your grandma and the eye doctor said would make my eye stronger.”

“Oh, I understand now,” Rose said nodding her head.

“Grandma explained to me that trying to focus on the baseball when I was up to bat might be hard to do. I wanted to play baseball so much that I didn’t listen to Grandma. I tried out for the team and got accepted because every kid got accepted. I did a good job in the outfield, but after we started playing other teams, I started having problems. Every time I took my turn at bat, I would strike out. I would try to focus on the ball, but I couldn’t see it right. Pretty soon, the other boys on the team started calling me four-eyes and making fun of me at practice when I practiced extra hard at batting the ball.”

Rose’s face changed from a sad look to an indignant look as she listened to her dad. “What happened, Dad? Did you get into a fight?”

Rose's dad chuckled. "Yes, I did. I got into so many fights that the coach told me I would not get to be on the team if I didn't stop fighting. He called your grandma and told her I was a big problem for the team because I hadn't learned how to get along with other kids."

"But...didn't you tell the coach about the boys' name calling and stuff?" Rose sputtered.

"Nope, I was so mad and I liked to fight them."

Rose's eyes seemed to grow larger with astonishment at hearing her dad say he wanted to fight. "Did you get in trouble with Grandma?" Rose asked, having concern for the little boy her dad once was.

"Nope, I didn't and was I surprised. Grandma and I had a talk. She explained that one day I wouldn't need to wear my glasses any more, and, if I was patient, I might find another sport to play. She said I had a choice: I could return to the baseball team and not fight, or I could quit and find another sport I might like to do. She said if I quit that would be okay and if I stayed with the team that would be okay."

Rose was really enjoying the story and could hardly wait to find out what happened next. "What did you decide?"

"First, I told Grandma that I couldn't decide. That's when she told me a story that helped me make a decision. Grandma said that when she was a little girl, she would spend summers and weekends with her grandpa. Once, she got some flower seeds in the mail and wanted to plant them. It was wintertime, and the ground was very hard, and in many places still covered with snow. Her grandpa explained to her that it was not the right time to plant seeds. The weather conditions would cause the seeds to grow into weak plants, and they probably wouldn't survive the cold. Her grandpa told her that if she was patient and waited until the right

time, in the spring, she could plant the seeds with his help. With patience and care, the seeds would become beautiful flowers. Grandma said her grandpa cautioned her. He told her that by the time spring came, she might decide that she didn't want to plant flowers in her garden. She might decide that she wanted to plant vegetables."

Rose had an uncertain look on her face and asked with a slight hesitation, "Did you understand Grandma's story?"

Dad chuckled when he heard Rose's question and saw her face. "I guess you could say that I thought your grandma just didn't understand. Her story didn't seem to make much sense to me. I think I must have looked just like you do right now!"

"Did Grandma explain the story about planting seeds?" Rose asked hopefully.

"Yes, she did. She said the seeds were like my eyes. The seeds were weak and would not do well planted in the winter. My eyes were weak and would not allow me to do well right then playing baseball. If I was patient until my eyes grew stronger, I could one day play baseball. Just like her being patient and waiting for the right time to plant her seeds in the spring."

"But...what did her grandpa mean about Grandma changing her mind and choosing to plant vegetables instead of flowers?" Rose was very curious about this part of the story.

"Grandma explained that I might find another sport I liked better, if I decided to quit playing baseball. She said maybe not right away, but if I was patient, an opportunity might just be around the corner!"

"So, Grandma said you might play baseball when your eye got strong, or maybe you might want to play a different sport?" Rose asked.

“Yep, and she was right. I quit the baseball team. When school started, I tried out for the football team and played the tackle position all through high school.”

“And...your eye was all well, and you didn’t need those ugly glasses!” Rose ended her dad’s story and smiled.

“I wish,” Dad laughed. “I wore those ugly glasses until I was in the eleventh grade and I still ended up in a fight now and then because some kid would call me four-eyes. I didn’t need to focus in on the football, playing a tackle position on the team. Having a weak eye didn’t matter when playing football.”

Rose and her dad both laughed when he finished his story.

“I like learning from stories,” Rose said and smiled.

“I think we still have to talk about the field trip. I can talk to your Sunday school teacher about the trip, or maybe you might want to reconsider and ask your grandma to go with you? It sounds like a fun trip. I’ve never been to the Colossal Caves. You might even find some cool rocks for your collection,” Dad suggested.

Rose didn’t answer her dad right away.

Dad waited patiently for Rose, who appeared to be thinking hard about their discussion.

After a few moments, Rose answered. “I would really like to go to the Colossal Caves, but not with the Sunday school group. I know I have to get used to not having a mom to go with me to different things, but I still get sad. If you could go, I wouldn’t be so sad. It’s sometimes hard to see the kids at school with their moms and especially on holidays like Mother’s Day. No, Dad. I don’t want to go camping with the group. Maybe our family can go see the cave sometime,” Rose asked hopefully.

“Are you sure, Rose?” Dad asked softly.

“Yes, I am sure. I’ll tell Grandma and Grandpa tomorrow morning. If I don’t, my grandpa will be hopping mad and go argue with the Sunday school teacher!” Rose said and grinned just thinking about her grandpa yelling at the Sunday school teacher.

“I think you are right about Grandpa!” Dad said and chuckled.

“Did you eat supper at your grandma’s house?” Dad asked.

“No, and I am sooo hungry, now!” Rose exclaimed.

“Let’s order a cheese pizza and watch a John Wayne western. How does that sound?”

“Yum,” Rose said and hugged her Dad good and hard. She felt like a big weight had been lifted from her heart.