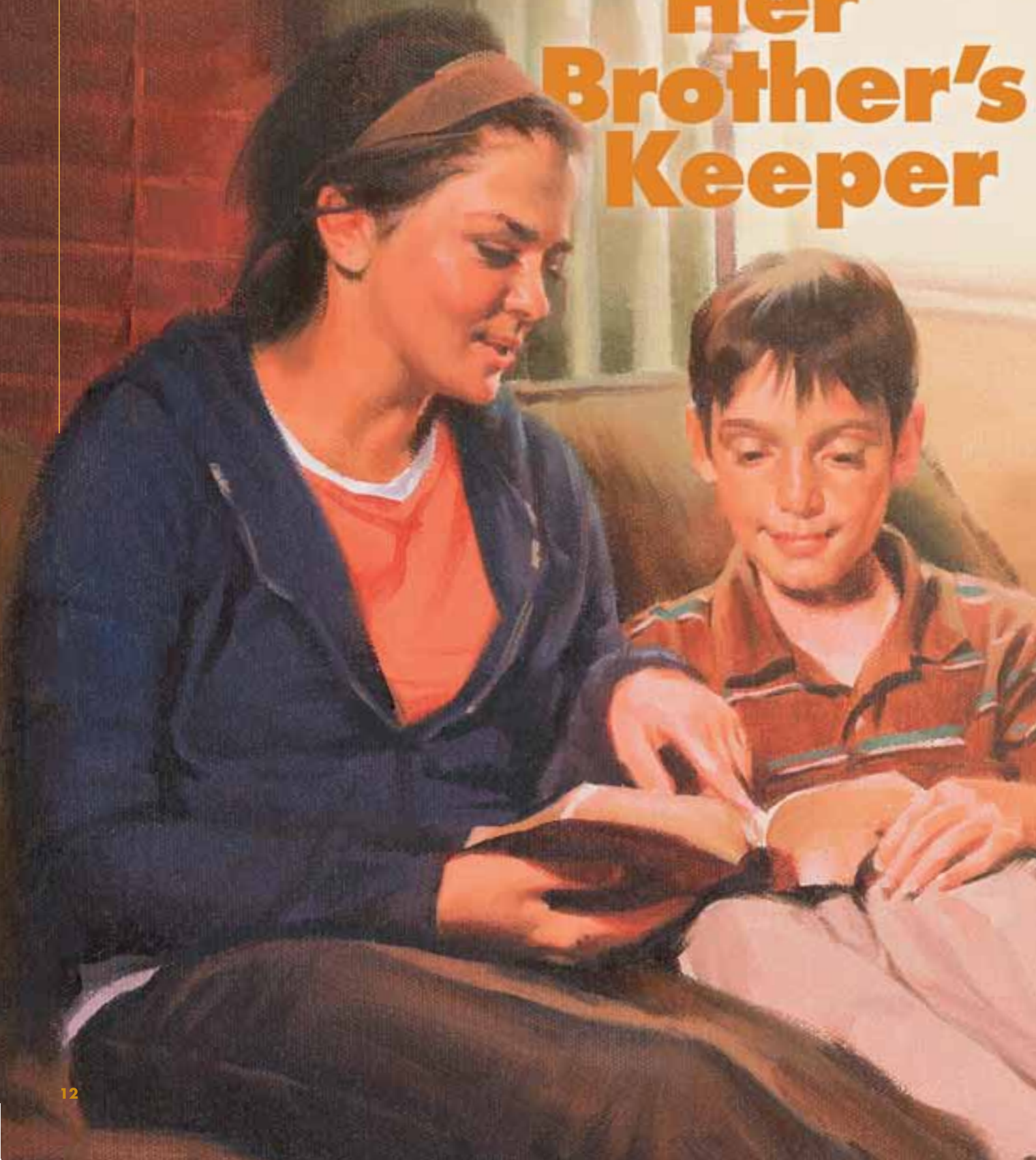


Amaru Anderson:

Her Brother's Keeper



Amaru Anderson, 16, often reads the scriptures with her 8-year-old brother, Sebastian. She also takes time to answer his questions, and prays with him regularly.

“We’ve been reading Joseph Smith—History once or twice a week,” she says. “It’s mind-blowing how many questions he has at eight years old, and I love answering them. I feel like I know him so much better.”

For example, one time Sebastian asked Amaru: “How do you think Joseph Smith kept going if all these people were doing all these bad things to him and to his family? All those things were going wrong, and if he was so good, why were so many bad things happening to him?”

“It really touched me,” she says. “I know that adversity strengthens you, but here’s a little boy asking me this hard question. We always read before he goes to bed, and I stay up a little later to get ready for the next day. I thought about our conversation and realized that I understood more about adversity from answering his questions.”

Even though her parents are supportive of her Church activities, they do not attend meetings with them. So she often goes to church at the Champlain Ward, Ottawa Ontario Stake, on her own or with her



Amaru likes to take time out of her busy schedule to read and pray with her brother.

brother and grandparents. She also looks to other family and ward members for additional support, especially those she meets at youth conferences and dances.

“I can feel their goodness when I talk to them,” she says, “I love getting together with these friends, even though I only see them at girls’ camp, or youth conferences, or dances when everyone comes.”

During her second year in Young Women, Amaru asked a lot of questions. Her testimony grew line upon line. She says, “I realized that I know the Book of Mormon is true. Then everything else started making more sense.”

That year, when she went to young women camp, it solidified what she had been learning. She found that getting away from the routine of daily life, learning the gospel, and being with others who shared the same values helped her focus on her testimony.

“When you’re at young women camp, you know the other girls have the same values, the same needs, and the same dreams that you do,” Amaru says. “You get to know them very well, and when it’s time to leave, you don’t want to let them down because they know you and are helping you to be strong. You know they’re backing you up.”

Her friends at the art school she attends know that Amaru will always turn them down if they ask her to do something she knows is wrong. At first she wondered if they would understand her standards, but then she learned that others respect her for doing what she knows is right.

“If you honestly keep gospel standards, others will notice, and say, ‘I really respect you for that,’” she says. “It will solidify everything you know and make you that much stronger. The more adversity you face with the guidance of the Spirit, the more it makes you a better person and a stronger disciple of Christ.”

Sebastian has a great example to follow. **NE**