



Bearing Another's Cares

By Sheila Kindred

(Based on a true story)

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not
(1 Corinthians 13:4).

Lynn dug frantically through her suitcase. “Mom, my teddy bear is missing!”

Mom came in and helped Lynn search through her belongings. “Where did you last see him?” she asked.

“I put Oatmeal in my suitcase before we left Aunt Kathy’s house, but he’s not here,” Lynn said.

“I’ll go call Aunt Kathy,” Mom said. She left the room and Lynn continued to search through her unpacked clothes.

A few minutes later, Mom came back. “Aunt Kathy hasn’t seen Oatmeal,” she said. “But she will keep looking.”

“I bet Kiera did something to Oatmeal,” Lynn muttered. “I bet she gave him to her dog to chew on.”

“Why would you say that about your cousin?” Mom asked.

“Kiera thinks I’m too old to have stuffed animals.”

“Did she say that?”

“No, but she’s only a few years older than I am and

she doesn’t have any stuffed animals at all. She doesn’t even have any dolls. She must think they’re silly. Her room is decorated with Mormonad posters, and she has lots of CDs, jewelry, and clothes.”

When Lynn had seen how grown-up Kiera was, she wanted to be like her. She didn’t want Kiera to think she was a baby because she still had a teddy bear, so she kept Oatmeal in her suitcase most of the time.

But Oatmeal wasn’t in her suitcase now. Lynn felt tears sting her eyes. “Mom, will I have to get rid of my stuffed animals when I graduate from Primary?” she asked.

Mom put her arm around Lynn’s shoulder. “Of course not,” she said. “And don’t give up hope. Oatmeal just might be taking the long way home.”

The next day Lynn wrote a note to Kiera:

Dear Kiera,

Thanks for letting us stay with you. I had a good time.

Love,

Lynn

P.S. Did I leave my stuffed bear there? Let me know soon. Please.

Two weeks went by. Then a package came in the mail for Lynn. It was from Kiera. Lynn tore open the attached letter. It read:

Dear Lynn,

I found your bear under my bed! I think my dog took him out of your suitcase. There was a tear on Oatmeal's arm, but I patched him up good as new. Before sending him home we wanted to make sure he had a good time. He was in a suitcase most of the time you were here and didn't get to do anything. I think he really enjoyed himself, judging by the photos. Please come and see us again soon. We loved having you. And don't forget to bring Oatmeal with you. He has a lot of friends here, just like you do.

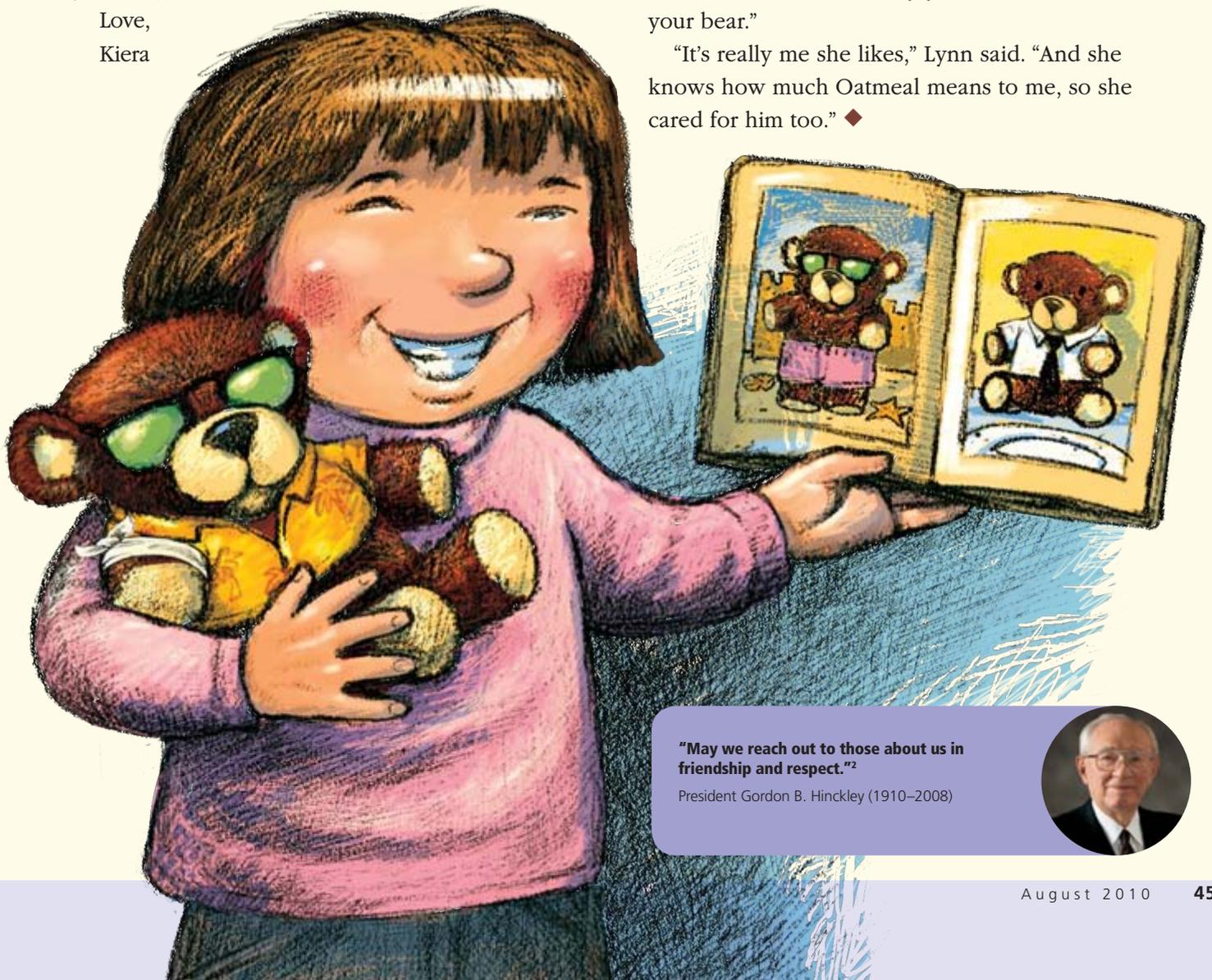
Love,
Kiera

Lynn opened the package and pulled out Oatmeal. He had a neatly patched arm with a bandage, and he was wearing small sunglasses and a doll-sized Hawaiian shirt.

Lynn laughed. "Mom, look at this," she said, pulling out a small photo album. "Look at all the pictures they took of Oatmeal. Here he is making sand castles with some kids on the beach. He's even wearing little swimming trunks. Here he is in a white shirt and tie, eating with the missionaries. Here he is holding a leash and walking the dog. I guess they finally became friends. Looks like Oatmeal had as much fun as I did." Lynn smiled and hugged her bear.

"Yes," Mom said. "I'd say your cousin cares a lot for your bear."

"It's really me she likes," Lynn said. "And she knows how much Oatmeal means to me, so she cared for him too." ♦



**"May we reach out to those about us in
friendship and respect."²**

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008)

