

REUNION

Ever since the royal family came into power, the entire kingdom and beyond had taken on beautiful dimensions of purpose and well-being. From the least to the greatest, a sense of ultimate worth was established in the lands. No longer was there the heavy burden mercilessly placed on the poor. No longer were the weak squeezed dry and left broken and empty, while a few remained bloated with power and wealth. No longer did the "have nots" feel the heel of the "haves". An atmosphere of equality ruled and justice reigned supreme.

In the royal family itself something very rare in all the world was freely displayed as an example and as a model to the subjects of the entire kingdom. Like the jewels on the king's crown, love bound the hearts of the family together radiating the warmth of devotion and the beauty of commitment. Faithfulness and the deepest sense of caring existed. Friendship at a marvelous level was pictured by this special royal family. Absent was the scheming and selfish ambition typical of so many other places.

Often the king and queen would spend weeks at a time visiting and living among their subjects. Their two small children spent most of their time romping with the village children. The palace became more than a show of authority and was opened to all as sort of a national second home. The king's table was always filled with visitors from all over the country. A much broader sense of family was daily practiced!

In spite of all this trust and honesty, as it always seems to happen, a few corrupt people deceptively slipped in among them. They managed to stir up envy and provoked secret jealousies. They prodded with fears of control and instigated rebellion. They set people against each other sowing many seeds of discord. They charmed and connived and agitated, and finally brought about a savage takeover of power. The king and queen were murdered in their own bed while the prince and princess were ordered to be taken to sea and drowned. Fortunately the one ordered to dispose of the children brought them instead to where foreign ships landed to take on supplies. After some quick words and bargaining the prince was sold to a merchant heading far to the west. The princess was placed on a ship sailing far to the east. Both had become slaves.

The terrible shock of the swift action had the children paralyzed with fear and left clutching to one another. It took more than a few sailors to pull them apart. And when tears and shuddering became screams of anguish a quick fist was used to silence each of them. They were carried off and added to the two ships' cargoes.

In most cases this would be the end of the story and of the royal family line, but not so this time. As it slowly developed, a remarkable hand of favor was upon the young boy. After the nightmare of that day wore off and the confusion mixed with deep sorrow was brought under control, and the severe loneliness was dealt with, an exciting chain of events began to take place. The boy went from good master to good master in the far off land until a wealthy merchant adopted him as a son and eventually brought him into confidence to manage his entire estate. Shortly thereafter a crisis developed in that land and surprisingly the prince was instrumental in preventing complete disaster for not only his father, but for the whole merchant class. This lifted him into a place of great favor with the court of the king who made him third in command of his whole empire.

About this time the lifelong burden of the prince began to revive and burn once more within his heart. Because the Empire had spread so far so as to absorb even his old homeland, the prince as head of economy asked and received authority to deepen the king's rule and market control in this expanding part of the Empire.

Once he finally weathered the emotions and distant travels, he finally arrived in the very land he had been torn from those many years prior. There he was shocked and almost numbed by the terrible conditions. The country lay waste with most of the lakes and rivers polluted. Most of the land appeared idled and wildly overgrown. Almost all of the former beauty of his own father's kingdom had been destroyed in barely twenty years' time. The population seemed as wild as the land and driven by a type of confused despair which hovered over the land like a cloud of darkness. The prince secretly wept while keeping his past hidden until his position of authority was well established. Then he began to take aggressive control!

Immediately he sent out a fleet to the Far East to find his sister. His vast connections in the trades were put into fast action to trace at last what had happened to her. He assumed the worst. Then other ships and military parties were sent after the heads of the families who were formerly trusted servants and friends of the old royal family. All who had eaten at the king's table were searched for thoroughly. Then, with political shrewdness riveted with steadfastness, he began to set the nation in order. He no longer had to bury his past, but embraced it again with complete freedom and the blessing of the king he now served.

All who were responsible for the early coup, the death of his parents and the loyal friends, those who were responsible for the utter ruin and devastation of the country and any others who were guilty of terrible abuses were gathered from throughout the nation. Others who fled were hunted down. One by one these were brought before the prince and confronted. After judgment was passed they were put to death in his presence. Their houses were burned and any other properties destroyed. This continued without let up until the land was cleansed and complete justice and honor reigned once again. After a campaign lasting nearly a year, an atmosphere of peace and good order was ushered in at last. Slowly at first, but then in a steady stream, the refugees began to pour back into the land. Unspeakable joys and heart melting reunions swept over the countryside as families divided for so long were brought together again. Husbands with wives. Children with parents. Old friendships restored with the palace renewed as the center of continual celebration. All received with tears the personal embrace of the prince. Many saw the same light of goodness within him that they had seen in his father. The weeping throughout the nation continued until it burst forth as a stream of living water bringing about cleansing and renewal and revival. The nation quickly healed and became in a very short time the prized jewel in the crown of the Empire.

Still, in the midst of the healing changes, one story was left unfinished. As the seasons slipped by, all who were close to the prince felt his heart as he waited for some word about the fate of his only sister, his own blood family. Even in the season or all the times of jubilation his heart longed for her! He groaned for the veil of mystery to be lifted concerning her long years alone.

Finally, one night late into the watches, a messenger ship appeared in the distance with signal lights. The princess had finally been found on a small island way off the coast of a remote island nation.

As you can easily imagine, near joyous bedlam broke out. A celebration of celebrations was set up throughout the kingdom. All had longed for this very special reunion. Peculiarly though, the prince went into a time of near silence and isolation. The times of childhood anguish and confusion surfaced with a new intensity. His grief and loss, the emotional suffering covered by layers of scars were now peeled away and left raw for a time of healing. Finally, several weeks later when the fleet returned with cannons saluting from shore to shore, an unusual quiet settled upon all the people. Almost as a hushed inhale waiting for the next step of this drama to unfold before their eyes. The prince was rowed out to the lead ship. There he stayed with his sister for several long days of private tears and laughter and sorrowing together. It was a time of letting their hearts blend together. It was a time of rapid healing and restoration. It was a time of recaptured innocence stolen from them so long ago. Once children of innocence, they were now adults wise to the world and its ways. They had somehow persevered and been deeply strengthened through what they had suffered.

The princess had not been so fortunate as the prince. She had faced cruel slavery and bondage. She had suffered much abuse at the hands of her masters. Finally she had fled to the little island after being sold to the local pagan temple. There she was to be among those who served the city's "god of pleasure and fertility" as a temple prostitute having become "worn out and old" in the eyes of her last owner. Along with the others she was to serve as an object of communion involving the desires of any and all who came to worship there.

But now the old was gone and the new had come. Healing flowed like a river and beauty blossomed forth once more in the good country. Celebrations and festivals abounded. Again the palace became as a second home for the people. The grand sense of family was restored and enjoyed by all. The princess reigned as queen, while the prince resumed his duties and responsibilities serving his king in the vast Empire. Of all his remaining days, his happiest were those seasons spent as a guest of his sister and her new and growing family.