

The Adventure Kids



Story by
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“Shiraz?”

“On my way, Mom!” Shiraz grabbed her backpack. Lunch. Math book. And most importantly, the latest *Adventure Kids* book: #11, *Lost at Lost Lake*. Time: 7:41. Perfect. She met Caitlyn on the corner at 7:45, Austin at the park, and Kyle at school.

“Wait, here’s the letter to excuse you for the Bahá’í Holy Day on Wednesday.”

“Mom, do I have to?”

“Of course. It’s the celebration for the Birth of Bahá’u’lláh.”

“Can’t I just go to school? I’m the *only one* who takes off for Holy Days.”

“And the only one who *complains* about a day off.”

“Mom! You don’t understand. You weren’t a Bahá’í when you were a kid. You didn’t have to be so *different*, or answer so many uncomfortable questions.”

“What questions?”

“Like, *What’s your religion called? What do you do? Do you believe in Jesus? Did you get any presents?*”

“Your friends are just curious.”

“It’d be easier to explain if I actually *got* presents for every celebration . . .”

Her mom laughed. “Bye, Sweetie.”

On her way to school, Shiraz felt confused. She didn’t really want to miss the Holy Day. She just didn’t want to explain. Or get strange looks. Even with her best friends, it was hard to talk about being a Bahá’í.

Late. Caitlyn had waited. “Race you!” she called, tagging Shiraz’s arm. They both beat the bell.

The *Adventure Kids* Book Club met at lunch.

“You guys just spent five minutes arguing about

the map of Lost Lake,” Caitlyn said.

“How can there be a map, if it’s *lost*?” Kyle insisted. Getting off the subject, Austin asked Kyle, “What’s your class doing for the fall festival?”

“We’re hosting bowling in our classroom.”

“We’re doing face-painting,” Austin grimaced.

Caitlyn remembered, “Oh, Shiraz, the festival is Wednesday. Isn’t that the day you can’t come to school?”

Caitlyn had been Shiraz’s friend since kindergarten. She was used to Shiraz taking days off, but she never understood why.

“Will you get to help your class with the bake sale?” Austin asked Shiraz.

Nervous, Shiraz quickly shook her head, “No.”

“Why not?” Kyle asked.

“I have to go somewhere,” Shiraz said. Then, the bell rang. Saved, thought Shiraz.

On the Holy Day, Shiraz helped cook for the potluck. Then came the only bad part—dressing up.

At the Bahá’í center, she helped set out the delicious spread of food: Persian, Greek, Mexican, Japanese, Indian, Russian, and more.

Across the room, Shiraz spotted Nasir handing out programs. He was a little older than her, but she knew him from Bahá’í school. Nasir had a smile for everyone, and he never seemed shy about being a Bahá’í. Sometimes, he even brought friends to the events. Nasir’s parents were Bahá’ís from Iran. Shiraz wondered what it had been like for them, growing up in a country without religious freedom.

“Hi, Nasir. How’s it going?” Shiraz asked.

He sighed. He seemed distracted, and a little upset.



“What’s wrong?”

“Today we heard from my cousin Aref, in Iran.”

“I remember him from our soccer games last summer,” said Shiraz.

“Well, he’s not being allowed into the university.”

“Why? He’s so smart,” said Shiraz.

“It’s not that. It’s because he’s a Bahá’í. It’s the Iranian government’s policy against Bahá’ís.”

“What? That’s so unfair,” said Shiraz. She hadn’t realized things were that bad for Bahá’ís in Iran. “Is there anything anyone—or *we*—can do?”

“Pray. And tell people about the Bahá’í Faith. Everyone needs to know about this injustice.”

“Nasir, isn’t it hard to talk to friends who don’t know anything about the Bahá’í Faith?”

“All my friends know a little.”

“How?”

“I tell them,” Nasir said with confidence.

“I’m not good at explaining,” Shiraz admitted.

“It’s okay. If they don’t understand, they’ll ask questions.”

“They already ask *a lot* of questions.”

He laughed. “Then just answer. A little at a time. Like chapters in a book, if you like.”

The celebration started with prayers. Then there was a multimedia show. Nineteenth century Persia. Bahá’u’lláh was born to a wealthy family, but He always cared for the poor. Then He began teaching a new religion. The rest really *is* like chapters in a book: The Dungeon. The Chains. The Vision. The Exile. The Journey in Winter. Betrayal. Banishment. The Prison City. Tragedy. Triumph!

It dawned on Shiraz that the Adventure Kids would *love* this story. Especially since it was all true.

At lunch, Shiraz had Persian rice, enchiladas, pot stickers, and three kinds of dessert. Then she played games with all the kids. Too soon, it was time to leave.

In the car, Shiraz read a quote from the program Nasir gave her: “*Religion bestoweth upon man the most precious of all gifts . . .*” That gift wasn’t easy to explain. But if she could just find the right words, maybe her friends would understand.



“Guess what?” her dad said. “Caitlyn’s mom called from the festival. Since it’s such a nice day, they’re staying open longer.

Want to help at the bake sale?”

Shiraz sat up straight. “Yes, please!”

Her mom pulled the car into the school parking lot, and Shiraz was halfway to the festival before she realized she was in a flowered dress.

What would her friends think?

“Shiraz, you’re here! And your dress is so pretty,” Caitlyn exclaimed.

“Where did you go? What did you do?” Kyle asked.

Shiraz swallowed. “Well, I watched a story of a great adventure.”

“An adventure? Can you tell us?” Kyle asked.

“Umm . . .”

“Have we heard this story before?” Austin asked.

“No, it’s . . .” Shiraz remembered Nasir—tell a little at a time, like chapters in a book. “It’s a special story. It’s hard to tell it here, all at once.”

“Then start telling us during lunch,” Kyle said.

“Yeah,” Caitlyn agreed. “Tomorrow: Adventure Kids hear the story of . . .” she looked at Shiraz.



Shiraz realized it wouldn’t be so different from their usual conversations about adventures. She said, “Okay, we’ll start with Chapter 1: A Nobleman Born in the Land of Persia.”

“Awesome—camels, swords, and turbans,” Austin said.

“Are there flying carpets?” Kyle asked, pretending to balance on one. The others laughed.

Shiraz smiled. “It is an amazing story. With danger, long journeys, and even miracles. I can’t wait to tell it.”