

The Orphan that was not...

A Story for the Family of God

by Faith Honorof





He will feed His flock like a Shepherd;
He will gather the lambs with His arm,
and carry them in His bosom,
and gently lead those who are with young.

Isaiah 40:11

The Orphanhood spirit

We know that from what Yeshua spoke to His disciples in John 14:18 that He was aware of their orphan way of thinking about themselves and others. “I will not leave you comfortless (as an orphan). I will come to you.” Yeshua knows the heart of every man and woman, and He knew the hearts of His disciples, and He understood that after His departure from the earth they would feel abandoned and deserted, like an orphan.

God is fully aware of man’s orphaned behavior in the world in which they live. Man’s spiritual disconnection from our loving Father in heaven produced an orphanage mentality. And soon mankind began to try—very hard—to figure out how and what he must do to please God.

Orphans behave as children who do not truly believe they have a Father who loves them, because they have never had an earthly father to show them love. And so they survive from one day to the next just trying to earn and work for the love and attention that they have been deprived of. Children in an orphanage can be very anxious little people, trying so desperately to be loved.

God sent His Son into the world to deliver His lost sons and daughters out of the orphanage of self effort. He came to impart sonship into the heart of every one who would come to Him and receive not only the forgiveness of our sins, but the great overflowing abundant love and provision that our Father in heaven so desires to give us—and the blessed assurance that He will never fail us, and will never leave us alone—no matter how many times we don’t get it right. No condemnation, no unworthiness. “Just come!” He speaks again and again to His little ones. My Son has paid the price, and you never have to live and behave like an orphan ever again.

Thank you, Yeshua—for showing us the way back into the Arms of our Loving Father, so that we can be a child of God who can demonstrate to the lost world that we are no longer orphans.

Hope you enjoy my little story.



Artwork for the cover and also this picture is by Gaye Lynne LaGuire, a personal friend of my husband Richard.

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A Story for the Family of God

Tomas stepped out from behind the bushes. He looked around to make sure no one saw him before he began to climb the tree. It was still only late in the afternoon and the sky was not yet really dark. The soft, twinkling lights in the community where he lived had just started to come on.

In back of the grand and beautiful house where he was hiding he had discovered a tall tree with good strong branches, and if he was very careful he could pull himself up to the ledge under the window—his feet just barely holding to the branch under him.

And then very carefully he would peek into the softly lit, beautiful room of the house.



Elegant furniture in shades of gold and brown had been carefully arranged in just the right places, and large, colorful family portraits decorated the walls. But Tomas was not interested in the nice furniture or rich, expensive carpets. He was watching the beautiful young woman sitting at the piano. It was at this time in the afternoon that she would almost always appear and begin to play her music. Her lovely, long, blond hair cascaded down her back in pretty, neatly arranged curls. She reminded him of one of the pretty dolls he would sometimes see in the window of Mc Guffin's General Store.

And so, like he had done a few times before, Tomas would hold himself to the ledge for a few minutes and watch the beautiful girl in the lovely room, and then he would lower himself to the ground and walk back to his house. As he walked he sometimes wondered if the girl in the beautiful room was what heaven looked like.



Tomas stopped on the sidewalk, as he watched the last part of his father's long black coat rush through the door and into the house. Tomas did not live in the poorest part of town, but it was not a long ways from it. He surveyed for just a second the bleak little gray house. Living in the small cottage was not really what bothered Tomas. But he knew that when he walked inside there would be nothing in the house that would fill his heart with joy. Well, almost nothing. There were no lovely pictures or soft colors to fill his house. Tomas's father believed that a home should be solemn and appropriate. "This is what," he had said many times, "pleases God." Tomas believed he was probably right. He was, after all, his father.

As he started up the walkway to the house he saw the face of his little sister, Sarah, in the window. Her hair had not been brushed well, and lay in tangled little puffs around her sweet six year old face. She was dressed in the same gray, tattered garment that she wore almost every day—except on Sunday, when she would put on her brown dress. But for Tomas she was the only bright spot that filled his home.



"Tomas." The voice of his older sister, Alicen, reached him as soon as he had walked in. Alicen was sixteen years old, and like her father, she found little joy in life—especially since their mother had died three years before, and most of the household duties had now fallen on her.

"You are late, Tomas. The potatoes need to be peeled and the garbage still needs to be taken out. I don't know what we are going to do with you, Tomas. Your behavior is just not appropriate."

Tomas forced a polite smile as he walked into the living room. His father looked up from the paper he was reading, but he was not smiling. “Go help you sister, Tomas. You must try harder to not be late. Tardiness is not pleasing to God.”

Tomas hung his coat on the rack in the hallway, and then gave his little sister a big hug, before going into the kitchen to help Alicen.

“Oh, Tomas, I made you a beautiful picture today, with the paper and pencil you gave me for Christmas. I know you will like it.” She giggled a small laugh.

“I am sure I will, Sarah.” He patted her on the head as he walked away.

After they had said grace and had eaten a meager meal, Tomas’s father pushed his thin-rimmed glasses up from the tip of his nose. “I have been thinking about your behavior, Tomas. You will soon be twelve years old, and I am afraid I am not pleased with your conduct and attitudes lately. And some of your dilatory habits are becoming a problem for our family. And they are most certainly not well pleasing to me, nor to God.

I am concerned about where these wrong attitudes are leading you. Your sister is left with too much of the work to do. You must try harder—if you ever expect to get to heaven someday and see your dear mother. God rest her soul.

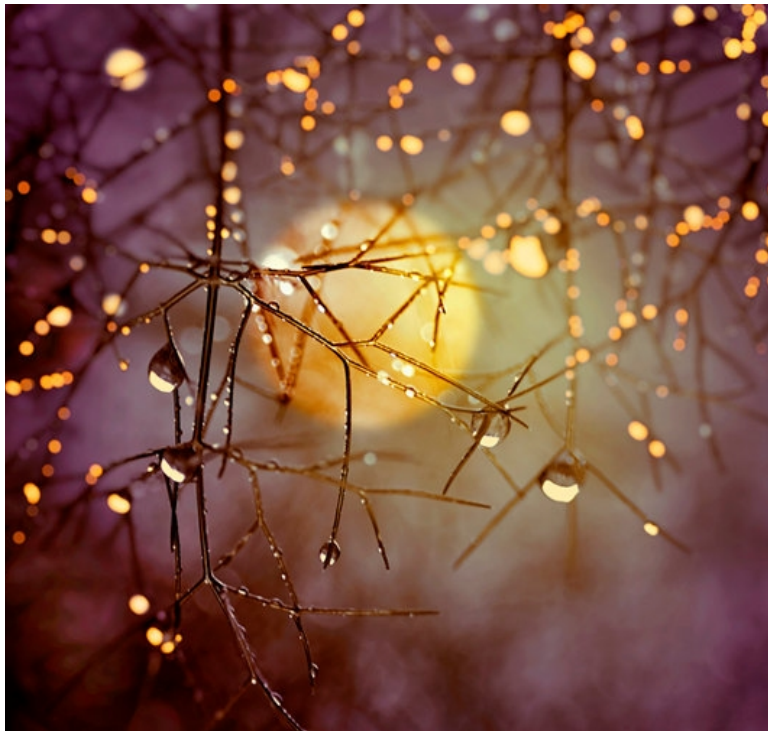
“I will be watching for improvement. Now, for the rest of this week you can be responsible for all of the kitchen clean up.”

Tomas nodded in agreement to what his father said, and then noticed, with a side glance, Alicen’s cat like smirk.



Tomas was glad when the lights went out and the room he shared with his two sisters grew quiet. He pulled the blue curtain to one side of the small window above his bed, so that he could see the large golden moon that hung in the sky like a round, flat spoon.

He closed his eyes and tried to remember his mother's face. He sighed. His father had given him a small picture of her after she had died, but he had looked at it so many times that it now had tear marks and smudges on it. He had put it away so that it would not be totally ruined. Before he fell asleep he heard, once again, the still, small voice coming from someplace inside of him. "I am here with you, My son." It was not the voice of his mother, but it always brought him such peace.



Six Years later....

“Tomas, wait for me.” His sister yelled too loud as Tomas came down the steps from the seminary. He looked around to make sure no one was coming out the door before he greeted Sarah. He loved his sister, but she was such a rag-a-muffin. She would run out of the house without her hat and she would never button her coat properly. She just couldn’t seem to take care of herself. Perhaps Father was right. She just needed more discipline in her daily habits.

“Sarah, look at you! You are not buttoned up and you don’t even have your ear muffs on. What am I going to do with you? You must learn to behave in a correct manner.”

“Tomas, you are becoming just like Papa. You aren’t fun anymore.” The excitement that had radiated from Sarah’s eyes, when she first saw her brother, began to leave her face.

Tomas looked down at his younger sister who was so different from the rest of the family. Sometimes when he looked at her he could see his mother smiling back at him.

“Tomas, as I was walking here to meet you I saw that poor boy who is almost blind—the one who sits by the road. I felt so sorry for him that I gave him the penny that I had been given for the week, and then I put my scarf around his neck. And then, Tomas, he asked me if I was Jesus. Isn’t that funny?”

Tomas smiled at his sister, for just a second, but then he disciplined himself. “Sarah, you must leave that boy alone. Papa would be very angry.”



“There are homes for such people. He might harm you... don’t you know that?”

Sarah ignored the question. “Do you like going to seminary, Tomas? Do you really want to be a minister?”

“Why of course, Sarah. It will please God and it will make Father happy. What a silly question to ask me.”

“I have to go, Tomas. I told Mrs Rosenbloom that I would come and help her today.”

“Does father know you are going to that house, Sarah?”
By the time Tomas had spoken the words Sarah was already running down the sidewalk away from him, and then, at that very moment, he heard the small voice from within say: “Go tell Sarah that you love her, Tomas.”



Five Years later:

The minister of Hope Field Church stood at the top of the steps with Tomas who was now 22 and Tomas’s fiancé, Mildred.

“It pleases me, Tomas, that you will be settling down here in Gray Stone Township, and that you have chosen a good woman to marry.” Reverend Doodle strained a forced smile in Mildred’s direction. “I am sure God is pleased. But now you must both excuse me. It is almost my dinner hour. Good evening.”

Tomas stood rigid at the top of the steps as the older man began to carefully proceed down the stairway and then down the sidewalk that had been his path home for almost seventy years. Tomas quickly glanced at Mildred, who stood a respectable distance from him. Her bonnet was clasped tight under her narrow chin. Her dark brown hair was pulled back into a neat bun, at the back of her neck. Her little gray pebble eyes darted after the old man as he left their presence. Her mouth moved into a difficult smile. "Shall we be going, Tomas? Your father and Alicen will be waiting for us, and we must not be late.

"Reverend Doodle is a fine man, but you will replace him. I will begin to see to it, as soon as we are married." Her lips moved into a less restrained smile. "But come now! It is getting rather chilly and we must be going."



As Tomas stood on the steps of the small, white steeple church he suddenly felt a strange chill, but it was not from the weather—it came from within his soul. "Where are you God?" his heart cried out.

Mildred had already started down the steps and was almost to the sidewalk. "Are you coming, Tomas?"

Tomas stood where he was, staring into the late afternoon sky. "Go ahead, Mildred. I have something I need to do."

"Well, don't be late. You know how important it is that we are punctual."

Tomas knelt in front of the gray headstone. The name of his sister, Sarah, had been engraved in the stone, along with her birth date and the year of her passing, three years prior. He evened the ground with his hand and laid a small bouquet of pink and blue lilacs next to the stone. Tears came easily to his eyes, falling onto his cold cheeks. “Why, God, did you have to take dear Sarah? Was it because she made so many mistakes? Or was it,” his quiet voice quivered, “because she was too good for this world. Oh, Lord, I so miss my sweet, little Sarah. She was the only happiness I had in this world.



“If only I could go back and tell her how much I love her. You know, Lord, that I have tried to be good and obedient and make you and my earthly father proud of me. But I still make so many mistakes. And you already know that I don’t love Mildred, but it would make my father happy if I marry her, because she has such well-to-do connections in this town.

“Oh, Lord, if only I could hear you again. It’s been so long since I’ve heard that still, small, voice in my heart. When I was growing up it always helped me through the very hard times.”

Tomas stood up, after putting the flowers closer to the head stone, so they would not blow away. He wiped the tears from his eyes and began to walk down the narrow path to his home. But before he had walked very far he saw a man sitting on a bench by himself. He was dressed in a warm plaid coat, with a blue scarf around his neck.

Tomas was feeling weary and so he decided to sit down on the bench, next to the nice looking man. He really did not plan on talking with him, but just wanted to rest for a minute, but he was glad when the man said “hello.” He noticed the pain in his heart suddenly began to lift.

Tomas discovered that it was very easy to talk to this stranger. They had sat on the bench for almost an hour, talking about many different things. But a couple of times the thought flashed in his mind: What would his father say if he saw him talking to a stranger?”

“So tell me, Tomas, why do you think God has abandoned you?”

“I guess,” he said, “because I’ve just not pleased Him. I try to do what is right, but my faults seem to be bigger than my good points. At least that’s what my father tells me. Do you think God keeps a check list? Sometimes I feel so lonely.”

“Tomas, I have a wonderful Father who has a great relationship with His Son. And He knows quite a bit about how God does things. From what you have told me, I can tell you with great certainty that your Father in heaven has not deserted you at all.

Your heavenly Father loves you and is proud of you—not because of the good or bad things you do, but because you are His son.

You have believed the lies of the devil for too long. You are not an orphan, Tomas. You are a deeply loved, and valued son. God sent His Son into the world so that lost men and women could be forgiven their sins, but that is only part of the story.”

Tomas shuddered a little when the word “sin” was mentioned, remembering some of the bad things he had done in his life.

The man continued to talk. “Tomas, the reason Jesus came was for the lost world to know how much their heavenly Father loves them. ‘For God so loved the world that He sent His Son...’ Many people, Tomas, have put up barriers to receiving this wonderful love, and believe they must earn God’s approval. Tomas, do you know what the greatest sin is that a man can commit against God?”

Again Tomas stiffened a bit. Was this man going to point out all of his sins to him?" He braced himself, as he always did with his father.

"The great sin, Tomas, is when a man or a woman hardens his or her heart to God's Love, and then to one another. This is why there is so much spiritual darkness on the earth, because love has grown cold and hard in so many hearts.

"Sometimes God has to search a man's heart to see if there is any light in it. Even a tiny little spark of light can be used by God to draw someone into His very great Love, and then their life will be changed forever. This is why God never desires to quench even the smallest hope, or crush a weak flame. You have been crushed many times, Tomas. I have not forgotten any of those moments. But you must forgive your hardened father. He grew up in an orphanage, and has never known any kind of true love—except for your mother. And he has been angry at God and people ever since her death. And Tomas, you must forgive yourself, because you feel you failed your little sister. She is having a wonderful time with her Father in heaven, and one day you will be with her again.

"You are at a turning point in your life, Tomas. But you must believe that your Father in heaven has great plans for your life. You are truly Our beloved son, and Our love for you is far beyond what you can even imagine..."



Tomas put his head down and began to weep. But it was a good cry, and then he leaned his head against Jesus' shoulder. He knew now that Jesus was the One who had been speaking to him. Jesus reached over and put His Hand over his heart, and a great burst of Love and Light filled Tomas—into every part of his being.

“Religion is artificial, Tomas, and does not please our Father in heaven. But if you will trust Us to lead and direct your life, you will soon discover that We have a wonderful journey planned for you, and that also includes a wife that you will truly love!”

Jesus then nudged Tomas, and smiled at him with a sparkle in His eye.

As Tomas closed his eyes for a moment he caught just a brief glimpse of a lovely young woman, sitting in a garden.



If you listen closely, Tomas, you will always hear the Holy Spirit within you. He will always tell you the truth. He is that wonderful voice that always brought you comfort, and now you will be able to hear Him again, clearly.

Tomas, We are going to send you to many different places, and you will share Our Love and Tenderness with the lost world around you, including with your dad and sister, and you will soon begin to see some very good changes. And never again, Tomas, will you ever feel abandoned.”

As Tomas looked in the eyes of Jesus he knew now that he was loved with an eternal Love, and he would never again feel like an orphan.



I will not leave you orphans,
I will come to you.
John 14:18

The Prodigal Son story (my own version) Luke 15:11-32
“But when he was still afar off ... his Father ran (to him)...” 20

The story Jesus told in the Bible about the prodigal son is one of my very favorites. What an amazing description of our Father (Abba) who loves His children beyond our greatest expectations.

This story is about a Jewish son (could be any son, but since Yeshua is telling this story to His disciples, we can presume he is Jewish) who has wandered from his Father’s home and blessing—believing the lies of hell that the world has much to offer him. His degradation and fall into sin is extremely severe for a Jewish son. The wealth his Father has given him, and his own grand vision soon disappears and he ends up cleaning the filthy stench and slime out of the pig pens of the world.

In his brokenness he remembers the abundant goodness of his Father’s house, and hopes that perhaps his Father will take him back, if only as a servant. He has already thought out, in detail, the repentance he will speak to Him.

Now this is the good part. While he is on this long journey coming home, dealing with all his guilt and unworthiness, his Father ‘sees him a far off and has great compassion’ for his lost son. He runs to him and simply cannot stop kissing him. (Can you imagine how the disciples of Jesus were trying to imagine God running to greet this sinful son?). While he is still in his filthy clothes his Father puts his arms around him and hugs him and loves him, as His lost son who has finally come home. And in the embrace of his Father’s great love, the son truly repents.

“Oh, Father I have sinned against heaven, and in Your sight,
and I am no more worthy to be called Your son.”

His Father tells his servant (perhaps the Holy Spirit) to put the very best clothes on his son, new shoes for his feet, and a special ring—the ring of a son. And then his Father plans a great party.

However the older brother has a big problem with this unworthy, younger sibling of his, and is feeling very resentful.

“What has he ever done for you, Abba?” He complains and does not hold back his resentment and anger. “I am the one who has worked so hard and tried to please you. But You have never shown me the love that you have for this renegade brother of mine. I kept all your rules and regulations, but now You are treating him far more special than You have ever treated me.”

“Oh, My oldest son, if only you knew how much I love you. Everything I have is yours. But you have been so busy trying to do what is right, that you have forgotten that what I truly want from you is just your love, and a joyful relationship together. But now your broken and humbled brother has come home.

“Come, My son. The party is for you too. And let us rejoice that My youngest son, and your brother who was dead is now alive (born again) and with Me forever.”



I am the Good Shepherd.



The Good Shepherd gives His life for His sheep.

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them,
and they follow Me.

And I give them Eternal Life, and they shall never perish;
neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all;
and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

I and My Father are one.

John 10:11, 27-30