



My Father's World®

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6

A Dog Called Shadow

RESPECT YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER

The Kim family had a beautiful black Labrador dog named Shadow. He was a surprise gift—the best gift ever! As Shadow grew, his rambunctious energy caused problems, so Dad decided to send him to dog obedience school.

On the way to Shadow’s first day of school, the big dog sat in the back seat of the van between Kwan and his sister Lei. Their older sister, Ki, was on a special shopping trip with Mom.

“This is going to be so much fun!” said Lei.

“Our dog is going to be the best dog ever! I’m going to teach him tricks!” said Kwan.

“Maybe we can do a show for the neighbor kids,” said Lei.

“Yeah!” said Kwan. “You’ll be great, won’t you, Shadow?” Kwan ruffled the fur on Shadow’s head, and Shadow barked. “See, he wants to do a show!” said Kwan. Lei and their father laughed.

When they arrived at Tim’s Dog Obedience School, both children held on to Shadow’s leash and walked with him into the school where a man met them.

“Hello,” he said. “I’m Tim.” He shook hands with Mr. Kim.

“I’m Hyo and these are my children, Lei and Kwan,” said Mr. Kim.

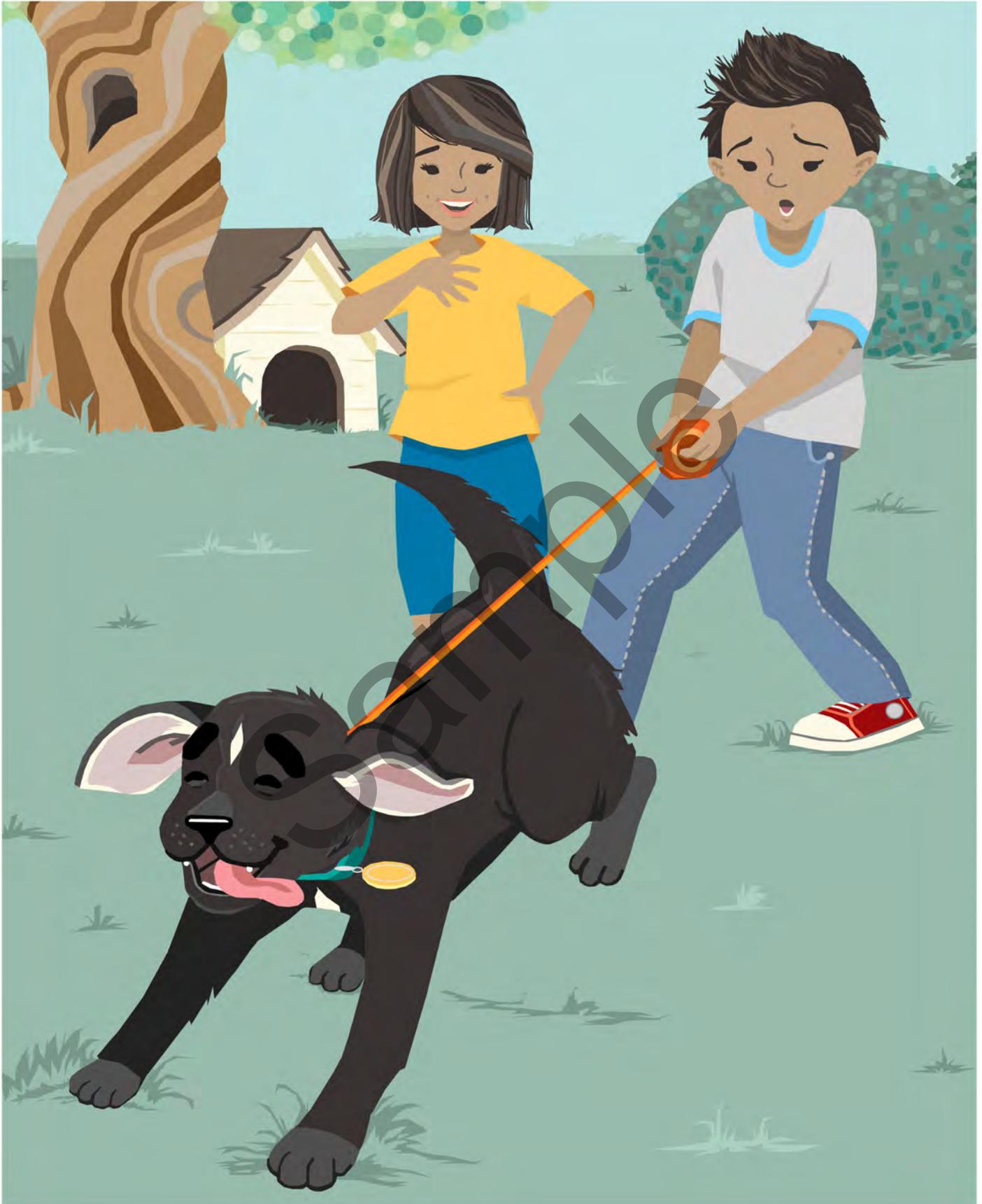
“And who is this?” Tim asked, bending down to pat the dog.

“Shadow,” said both children together, smiling proudly.

“Well, Shadow, welcome to my school.” Shadow barked, and everyone laughed.

Tim led them out the back door where, on nice days, some of the lessons were held. Tim began working with Shadow immediately. He carefully showed the children how to train their dog. The hour seemed to go by very fast, and soon Tim led the family inside again to give them their homework.

“Be sure to practice every day with Shadow,” he said. “He needs to review these lessons during the week.” Kwan and Lei nodded, looking forward to the assigned task. It would be serious business teaching their dog, but it would be fun too!



Lei and Kwan with Shadow

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During the week, the children practiced with Shadow just as Tim had shown them. After a few weeks, Shadow seemed to be making progress. He was learning to come when called, no longer barking loudly at visitors, and was better about not yanking the leash while going for a walk.

One day, Shadow spied a squirrel and began to run toward it, pulling hard on the leash and almost running into a busy street.

“No, Shadow!” said Kwan sternly. Shadow stopped in his tracks. “Whew, that was close,” said Kwan.

“Obedience school is a good thing for Shadow, isn’t it?” said Kwan’s father. Kwan nodded.

The next Sunday after church, Kwan had a question.

“I heard Pastor talking about honoring our parents. Is that one of the Ten Commandments?” he asked.

“Yes,” answered his father. As the family talked, they also signed so that Ki could understand too. Ki was deaf, so the whole family had learned sign language.

“What does ‘honoring your parents’ mean?”

“Well, for children, one thing *honoring* parents means is *obeying* them.”

“Why?” Kwan’s father sat silently for a couple minutes.

“Well, it’s like Shadow.”

“Shadow?” said Lei as she giggled. Their parents chuckled a little too.

“Yes,” continued Mr. Kim. “What do you think would happen if we took Shadow to Obedience School, and he decided to run the class?” Lei imagined Shadow trying to be the teacher, and she laughed. Kwan laughed too.

“It would be a disaster, Dad!” he said.

“Exactly! And why would that be?”

“Well, Shadow doesn’t know what to do. That’s why we’re taking him in the first place!”

“And?”

“Shadow might try to teach all the dogs to chase squirrels instead of walk calmly!” Lei added.

“Yes!” answered their father. “Would that be a good thing?”

“Not for the squirrels!” signed Ki, and they erupted in laughter.

“Anything else?” asked their mom.

“Shadow would be a pest and bark all the time, and he wouldn’t be any good at tricks!”

“Excellent thoughts, Ki!” said Dad.

“So,” said their mother, “you don’t want to disobey and be a pest, do you?” The children thought for a minute.

“At least we don’t bark!” said Kwan, and everyone laughed.

“And Shadow might even get hurt if he ran out into the street,” Kwan said with concern.

“We don’t want to get hurt either,” said Lei thoughtfully.

“That’s right, kids. Part of obedience is for your protection. Why do you think that is?” asked their father.

“Because parents know better than we do? Like Tim knows better than Shadow does?”

“Yes, that’s exactly what I was getting at!” said their father happily. “And there’s at least one more important point here. Can you guess what it is?”

“That we are like Shadow?” asked Lei.

“No, that’s not exactly what I mean,” answered their father.

“That we might get into trouble if we don’t obey?” asked Kwan.

“Well, that can be part of obedience, but that is not what I’m thinking of,” answered Dad. “I’ll give you a clue—the word starts with *L* and is something your mom and I have a lot of for you.”

“Love!” shouted Kwan.

“That’s right! We parents love you dearly and want what is best for you. That is why we sometimes ask you to do things you don’t like.”

“Like chores?” asked Lei.

“Yes, like chores,” answered Dad.

“But why are chores *good* for us?” whined Kwan.

“Take the whine out of your voice, please,” said Mom. “Part of respecting your father and mother is using a proper tone of voice.”

Kwan tried again with a nicer tone. “Why are chores good for us?” he asked calmly.

“One reason is that we don’t want you kids to get into the habit of being lazy,” answered their father. “We want you to learn how to work *now* so you will work well at your jobs in the future. We don’t want you to miss out on good things later because you never learned to work.”

“Yeah,” said Kwan soberly, “that would be bad.”

“So, it’s good for you to obey us because we *love* you,” said their father.

“And it’s good for all of us to obey God because *He* loves us!” said their mom. “God loves us more than we can imagine. Why *wouldn’t* we want to obey Him?”

“And you know what else?” said Kwan.

“What?” asked Mom.

“Just like Shadow is glad that we love and take care of him, we are glad that you love and take care of us, Mom and Dad!”

And they were very glad indeed.

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