

So Far So Close

Children coping
with the incarceration of their loved one



Katrina McCutchen Butler

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by Katrina McCutchen Butler

So Far So Close Book Series

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"What's wrong Calvin? Why aren't you playing with us?" said Anita.

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"Oh, hey Anita, I'm sad because my dad isn't here anymore. It's going to be a long time before I see him again."

"He did something really bad... He broke the law," sighed Calvin.

"Oh, I see. The same thing happened to me. The police took away my Auntie Kim for a really long time. She broke the law too," said Anita.

"Calvin, I know how you feel. I thought I was the only one this happened to."

"My family said to keep it a secret, so I didn't tell anyone."

"I know you are sad," mumbled Anita.

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"Calvin, when my Auntie Kim left, I cried because I missed her so much."

"How long was she gone?" questioned Calvin.

"I don't know, but it was really long," replied Anita.

"Anita, the police took my dad. I don't know what I am going to do! Nothing is going to be the same," cried Calvin.

"I remembered my mom was crying and yelling at the police. I didn't know what to do. Now the house is so quiet," Calvin said sadly.

"When I come home from school, I look for my dad, but he's not there anymore. Sometimes at night, I cry, but I don't tell my mom. "

My dad did a bad thing, I get it, but he's still the best dad," exclaimed Calvin.

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"I cried a lot too. My auntie and I were very close. We did everything together."

"The police were talking to her like she was a terrible person, but she's not. She is a great auntie," said Anita.

"It's not fair! I want my dad back!" yelled Calvin

"I know you do, but do you know about all the things you can do to be close to him?" Anita asked Calvin.

"Huh? What are you talking about? I thought I would never see or talk to him again," replied Calvin.

"Even though my Auntie was far away from me, we did things to stay close to each other," said Anita.

"Really? Like what?" questioned Calvin.

"My Auntie would call me to see how I was doing. We would talk on the phone, just me and her, for a WHOLE 15 MINUTES! "

"It was fun to tell her everything she missed. I would tell her secrets like we always did when she was at home!" exclaimed Anita.

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"Anita, you mean you were able to call her?"

"No, Calvin, I couldn't call her, but she could call me, and it was always a surprise."

"My mom would say, 'Anita, Auntie is calling today!'"

"Mom would tell me the time Auntie was going to call, so I would wait by the phone to make sure I didn't miss her call.

And sometimes, my mom and I would drive to see my auntie for a visit," explained Anita.

"We would have a long drive, and when we got there, we would have to wait in a long line, take our shoes off, and the police would check my mom and me to see if we were hiding anything under my clothes," said Anita.

"We would sit and wait for my auntie to come through a door that had a loud buzzer. When I saw my auntie, I could only hug her once, or else the police would get mad and tell us to stop," explained Anita.

"So when I hugged Auntie, I would make sure I hugged her tight so she would know how much I missed her," said Anita.

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"It was fun to go to the vending machines and get us a bunch of snacks. The police wouldn't allow my auntie to go to the vending machines, but when I brought the snacks back to our table, she would help me eat all of them. It was so much fun," laughed Anita.

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"We were in a big room with a whole bunch of other families. We would have such a good time talking and laughing until the police would tell us our time was up. That's when I got sad again," Anita explained.

"My Auntie would tell me it was okay because I could come back another time. We would hug one last time, and then the loud buzzer would come on.

Auntie would walk through the door until I couldn't see her anymore," sighed Anita.

"So, you mean the police took her away from you again?" yelled Calvin.

"Yeah, it wasn't time for her to come home. My mom said her new home was somewhere behind the doors," Anita said sadly.

"Calvin, I know exactly how you feel, but
guess what?"

"What, Anita?"

"When we couldn't visit Auntie, she would write me letters and send them to me in the mail. She and I were pen pals," said Anita.

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"Pen pals? What's a pen pal, Anita?"

"Calvin, You know! A pen pal is someone who writes to you a lot and you write back to them. After school, I would run home to see if there was a letter in the mailbox just for me!"

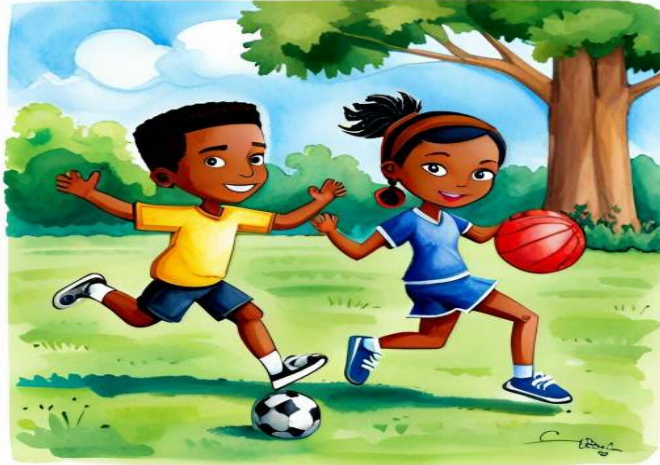
"Anita, I know my dad and I would be great pen pals. I can't wait to write to him. All of this sounds great. I thought I wouldn't be able to see my dad for a long time."

"Now, I can visit him, write to him, and he can call me too!" said Calvin

"I am so excited. Thank you, Anita. I am so happy I do not have to miss my dad as much. He's my number one homeboy, Anita!"

"Calvin, I am glad you are feeling better. Now come on so I can beat your butt at kickball."

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"Not in your dreams, Anita", laughed Calvin