

College: My daughter was hundreds of miles away, yet we still shared a special bond

Continued from Page B1

“She’s such a delightful child, so adventurous and imaginative,” her teacher said. Where had the time gone? Wasn’t it just yesterday when I had gone to her swim meets, her piano recitals? Taken her to Israel to meet her father and shown her Jerusalem, the city of her birth?

Now our time together was drifting away like the sand on the beach. In a few short days, she’d be on her own. And unfortunately, so would I.

I had urged Elissa to choose a college outside of Oregon, not wanting to inhibit her life the way my mother had. She was always checking up on me, wanting to know where I’d been, who my friends were. Never trusting me to make my own decisions, questioning me all the time until I couldn’t take it any longer and moved out.

Elissa deserved her freedom, unencumbered by me who wanted to control her life. “You need to go away to college. Find your own identity. Figure out what you want to do in life. I don’t want you feeling trapped like I did,” I said.

We had done the college circuit tour the year before, visiting the campuses of Pomona College, Scripps College, Occidental College and Santa Clara University. She chose Santa Clara, a Catholic school in northern California. As I pulled into the parking lot, we looked at each other. She looked glorious. A cold sweat ran down my face. I helped her unload, carrying the boxes



David Prasad

to her dorm room.

“Don’t get too religious, I don’t want to see you reciting a rosary,” I said, joking. “Mom, you know me better than that,” she said. I drove home the next morning, expecting to hear my daughter’s voice on my answering machine. But there were no messages. My heart ached.

Fumbling through my purse, I found the crumpled piece of paper where she had scrawled her new phone number and picked up the receiver. “No,” I told

myself slamming it down. “I need to let her be.”

Walking into her bedroom, I opened the blinds. Everything was gone. Her clothes, all her makeup, her boombox. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw her teddy bear. It was lying on her bed, its beady eyes smiling at me. I cuddled it in my arms, crying softly. The yellow and white fur around its nose had long ago worn away.

The teddy bear had been a gift from my mother along

with a pink frilly dress, a polka-dot sleeper and diapers. When I’d lay Elissa in her crib as a baby, I’d wind a key so that the bear could play a soothing lullaby. Soon, it became her timeless possession.

She had left the bear to comfort me. Soon, the phone rang. “Mom, are you okay? I haven’t heard from you and was worried something might have happened,” she said on the other line.

I thought she had been

too busy to call. “Mom, you’ll always be in my life. I love you,” she said. I took a deep breath. My daughter was hundreds of miles away, yet we still shared a special bond.

When Elissa came home the following summer, I was thrilled. We spent sev-

eral hours sorting through her old clothes and books in the garage. Tucked underneath her Sunset High School yearbook was the teddy bear. “Remember this?” I said, dusting it off. I gave it back to her to keep. “It’s yours now. A token of my love.”

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RSKM SDR DN WKGTSCTJV
RSMSJTDZ: "YWMMSJ FSWKS."
Yesterday's Cryptquip: THE WOMAN JUST UNDERWENT A COMPLETE NOSE JOB. SHE MIGHT BE RECUPERATING IN THE NEO-NASAL WARD.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: V equals G

7-16 CRYPTOQUIP

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NFKD F ZFAAUD TSFO F
IRDLQSSO ZFM ADKUDI, MUM
TDJDA TFB "TDJDA TFB"?
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