



# JEHOSHAPHAT and the Singing Soldiers

'Life is sweet!' Winston snuggled down to watch the final episode of the mystery show he'd been following. 'Finally,' he murmured, 'I'll find out who's been stealing the hubcaps off all the cars in town.'

Then he heard the worst thing he could possibly hear .... 'Win-ston?' His mom was calling from the kitchen.



## Jehoshaphat and the Singing Soldiers

'No-o-o-o,' he groaned silently. 'Not now!'

'Winston,' she called again. 'Did you hear me?'

'Coming, Mom.' Getting up off the sofa, he shuffled to the kitchen, pulled out a chair, and slumped down into it as if his backbone had just turned to jelly.

*'Don't parents realize that a kid has a life, too? I mean . . . Really!'*

'Sit up, Winston. I have something important to tell you.'



## Jehoshaphat and the Singing Soldiers

Mom totally missed the body clues. No sympathy here! Winston sat up and took notice that Mom was fidgeting with the edge of her coffee cup. Suddenly, he was all ears. Something was up, and he was about to be included in the adventure.

*'Go, Mom. What are you waiting for?'*

Mom cleared her throat and swallowed so hard Winston could see the lump travel down her neck.



## Jehoshaphat and the Singing Soldiers

'You're not going to like this, Winston,' she said in a voice barely above a whisper. She wouldn't look at him, her eyes were glued to her coffee as if it was going to do a trick or something.

'What?' he managed to squeak out. Goose bumps were crawling up and down his arms and legs. 'Have I done something wrong?'

Mom looked up and smiled.

Winston breathed a sigh of relief.

'No,' she said, running a finger round and round the rim of her coffee cup. 'It's just that Aunt Frieda is coming for a visit, and...'

'Aunt Frieda? The one who carries a dictionary in her pocket to read for fun? The one who thinks I should become an opera singer?'

By now Winston realized he'd totally jumped out of his chair and was practically screaming. Mom's eyes were huge, her mouth hanging wide open.

## Jehoshaphat and the Singing Soldiers

Time stood still—at least for a second. Then Winston took a deep breath and fought for control. Mom's coffee cup rattled against the saucer as she squeezed the handle between her shaking fingers. And it was his fault. He had to do something.

Winston sat back down and put his hand on Mom's.

'Sorry, Mom. Guess I got a little excited.' He took another deep breath. 'So Aunt Frieda's coming for a visit?'

Mom was a trooper. She smiled as if none of that had even happened. 'Yes. She'll be here for the weekend. I've talked to your father, and . . . and . . . we've promised Aunt Frieda that you will wear that lovely bright yellow suit she bought you for Christmas and sing a solo in church on Sunday morning.'

*'Lovely? I'll look like a canary!'* Now Mom was looking straight at him, but somewhere she had

## Jehoshaphat and the Singing Soldiers

recovered her poise. She definitely had that ‘And I don’t want to argue about it!’ look on her face. You know, where she cocks her head and stares at you from under motionless raised eyelids.

Winston wondered how long she could go without blinking if he stared back, but then he realized this was not the time to experiment. He was busted, and he knew it. Dad was in on it, too. The three of them had conspired against him. This battle was too big for him to win. Where could he go for help?

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You might not believe it, but a similar situation occurred in the Bible. In the Old Testament of all places—2 Chronicles 20:1-30. No . . . Winston and Aunt Frieda aren’t mentioned, but singing is. In fact, the story is all about some singing soldiers who went to war. Sounds crazy? Let me tell you.

There was this king in Israel—the land of Judah

## Jehoshaphat and the Singing Soldiers

to be exact. His name was King Jehoshaphat. (Don't worry—the story is easier to read than his name.) This king loved God and had worked hard to make his kingdom one that honored God in every way. I'm sure you remember stories about Jehoshaphat's great, great, great grandfather, King David. You know—Goliath... the slingshot... cutting off the giant's head. Great, great, great story, huh?

Anyway, some men came to visit King Jehoshaphat.

The king looked up as several men rushed into the room.

'My Lord the king,' one man said, his breathing shallow and ragged. 'There is a huge army coming against you from the land of Edom on the other side of the Dead Sea.'

'It's the armies from Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir,' said a second man. 'And they've already advanced to Hazazon Tamar!'

## Jehoshaphat and the Singing Soldiers

The king exclaimed, 'We must seek the Lord at once. I am proclaiming a fast for all of Judah.'

Soon men from every town in Judah gathered together, along with their wives and children. They came to the new courtyard at the temple in Jerusalem to seek help from the Lord. King Jehoshaphat entered the courtyard and stood before the assembly. Lifting his eyes to the heavens, he prayed. 'Lord, God of our fathers, are You not the God who is in heaven? You rule all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in Your hand. No one can withstand You.'

King Jehoshaphat continued to pray, reminding God that He had given the land to these people—the descendants of Abraham. He explained that the people had built the temple as a sanctuary and had promised to come to it in times of trouble because they knew God's presence was there and believed that He would hear their prayers and save them.