

LEVELED READER • K

🔊 Hugs for
Daddy



Written by Cecilia Maeson
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Hugs for Daddy



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🔊 My Daddy



My daddy is my hero. He has a very special job. He goes to work every day in a **uniform**. He knows how to **salute**. My daddy is in the **military**. He keeps people in the world safe.

Daddy and I do lots of fun things together. We can spend a whole day building towns out of blocks. We even play **instruments** together. Daddy plays the drums, and I play the **cymbals**. Mommy calls us her “rock stars.”



But what I look forward to every day are the stories Daddy tells me at bedtime. They always end with a great big hug good night. “Good night, my little treasure,” Daddy will say. “Good night, Daddy,” I say as I wrap my arms around him.



One morning, I came downstairs and saw Mommy and Daddy talking at the kitchen table. Daddy was holding Mommy's hand. Mommy saw me standing in the doorway. She smiled at me, but her smile was missing its sunshine.

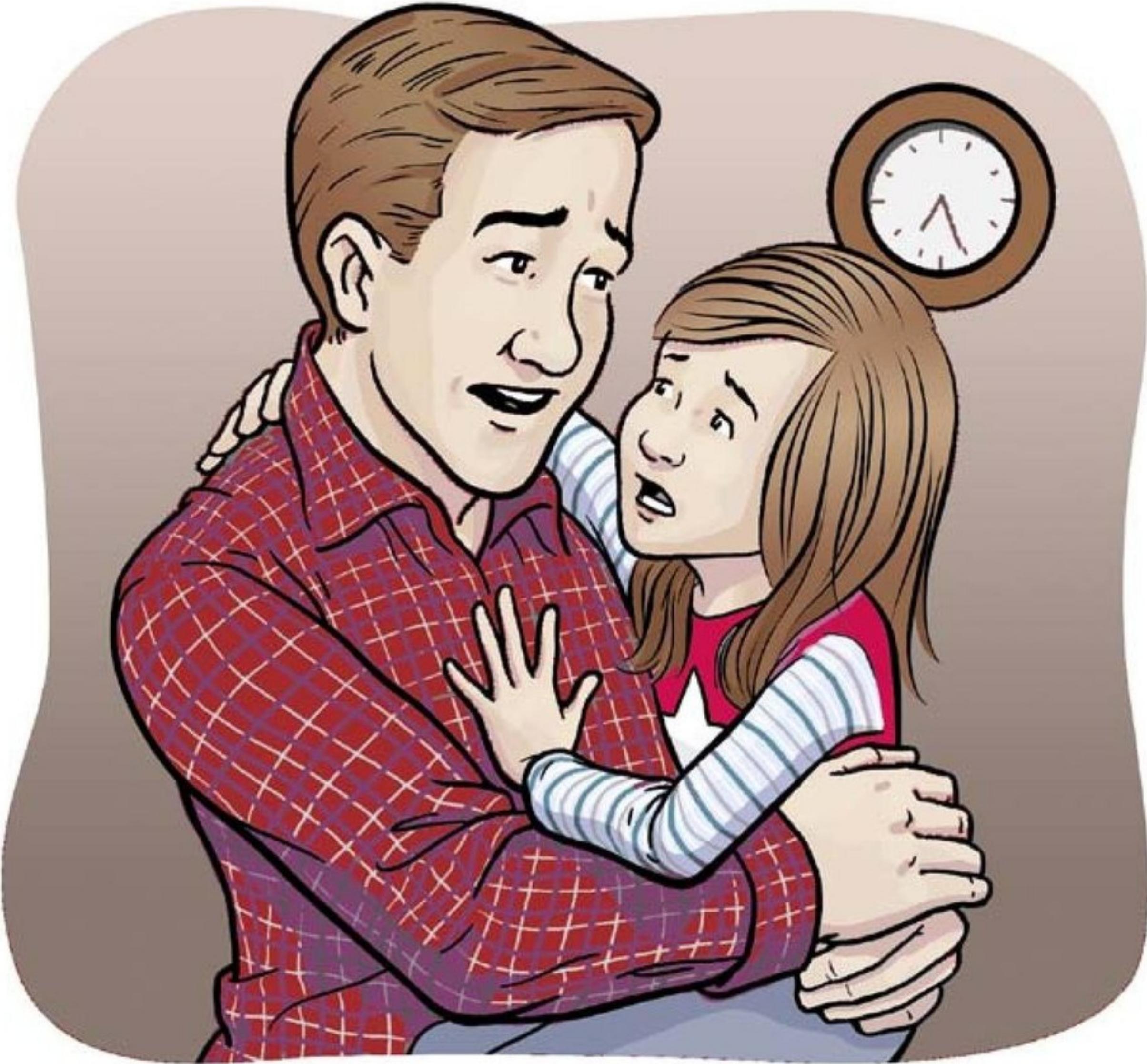
🔊 “Good morning, my little treasure,” Daddy said. “Hop up on my lap so Mommy and I can talk to you about something.”

“Okay, Daddy,” I said, and I snuggled up next to his chest.

“You know that Daddy has a very important job,” Mommy said.

I nodded. “He helps keep people safe,” I said.

“That’s right,” Daddy said. “I work every day to help keep people safe. Sometimes that means I need to help people who live far away from us.” He paused. “When I do that, I have to leave you and Mommy for a while.”



I looked at Mommy and then at Daddy. “Are you going away?” I asked.

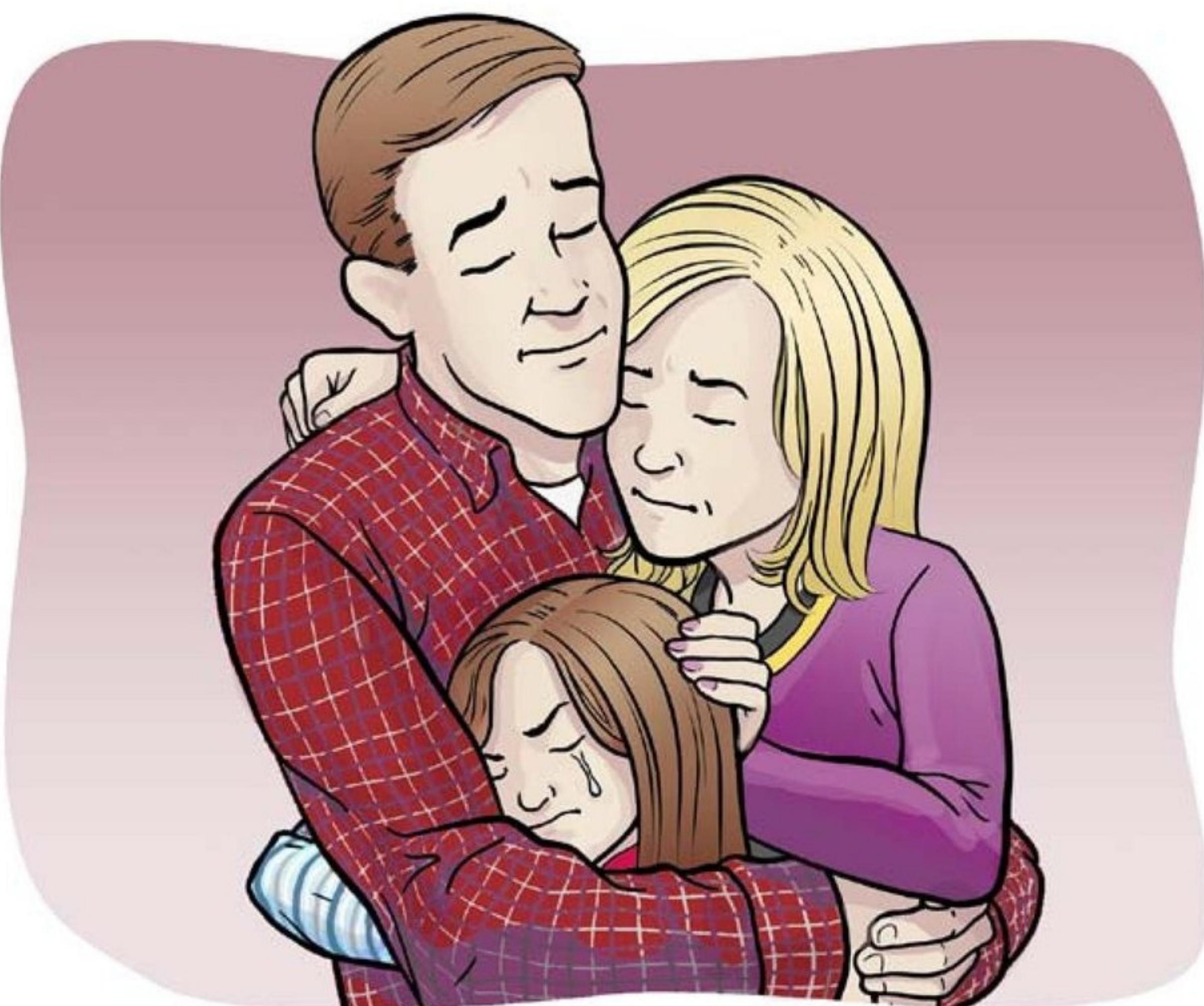
Daddy nodded, and I snuggled deeper into his chest.

“Daddy, how long is a while?”

“In order to really help,” he said, “I have to be gone for about a year.”

🔊 After Daddy said this, I couldn't hear anything but the *tick-tock* of the clock on the wall. Then I felt tears start to roll down my cheeks. "But if you are gone that long," I said, "won't you forget me?"

Mommy put her hand on my back, and Daddy pulled her and me into a big hug. "No, honey," Mommy said. "Daddy could never forget you."



🔊 Saying Good-bye

The day Daddy had to leave,
Mommy gave him a big kiss.
Daddy gave me a big hug and
asked me to be good. “I love you,
my little treasure,” he said. Mommy
and I held hands as we waved
good-bye to him. Daddy waved
back, and then he was gone.



🔊 When Mommy and I got home, the house seemed really quiet and empty. I sat down on the couch. Mommy sat next to me. We both started to cry. I am proud of my Daddy. I am glad he helps people. But I didn't want him to go away.

“It's okay to be sad,” Mommy said. “I'm sad, too. We are both proud of Daddy, but sometimes we will need to cry, and that's okay.”

“I'm going to miss Daddy a lot,” I said to her.

Mommy looked at me and wiped the tears from my face. She got up from the couch, walked over to the closet, and pulled out a large basket.



“Remember,” she said, “every time we want to share something with Daddy, we will write it down, draw a picture, or even make something. Then we will put it in this basket, and at the end of the week we’ll send everything in a box to Daddy. That way, he will know what we’re doing here while he’s away.”

🔊 Over the next few days, I filled the basket with lots of things: a picture of me, a letter, a drawing I made. All of these things were important for me to share. But I still felt like there was something missing from the basket.

At bedtime, Mommy tucked me into bed. She read me a story. She gave me a big hug good night. That's when I knew what was missing.

"Mommy," I said, "Daddy and I used to read stories at bedtime. We used to give each other a big hug good night. Who reads stories to Daddy now? Who gives him his bedtime hug?"

Mommy gave me another hug.

"I wish I could send him a good night hug," I said.

🔊 Hugs for Daddy

The next morning when I woke up, I saw a big piece of paper on the kitchen floor. I saw markers and crayons. “I know how you can send a hug to Daddy,” Mommy said. “If you lie on this piece of paper, I can make a **tracing** of your body. We will cut it out, and you can decorate it to look like you. If we send this to Daddy, he can wrap the arms around himself each night. It will be as if you are giving him a hug good night.”

I lay down, and Mommy traced around me with a marker. I filled in all the white space to make it look like me. I folded it neatly and placed it in the box with the other items to send to Daddy.

► Two weeks later, we got a letter back from Daddy. Most of the letter was written to Mommy. But at the end of the letter, there was a special note just for me:

Hannah,

*Thank you for
the hug. I look
forward to it
every night. I
miss you, too.*

*I love you, my
little treasure.*

—Daddy



Glossary

cymbals (<i>n.</i>)	brass plates banged together to make music (p. 4)
instruments (<i>n.</i>)	objects used to play music (p. 4)
military (<i>n.</i>)	the armed forces of a country (p. 4)
salute (<i>v.</i>)	to make a sign of respect to a superior officer (p. 4)
tracing (<i>n.</i>)	a drawing of the outline of an object (p. 14)
uniform (<i>n.</i>)	special clothing worn by members of a group (p. 4)

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