

The
Teddy Bear
That **Saved** Me

Gregory Patrick

Chapter 1

I'm not sure if you're aware of this, but all hand made toys are made with magic. Oh, sure, they might be knit with wool, and stuffed with plush, but the real secret is magic, Hands create with love and care, but it is the heart that creates magic. And all things made with magic have a purpose, and every hand knit toy knows this. However, sometimes knitted things have a hard time figuring out what their purpose is.

Dad worked up his little bear all day and deep into the early evening, his fingers carefully knitting up a little teddy bear. Every once in a while Dad would lay the knitting to his side, rise from his giant, comfortable chair and walk a few steps to Jackson's room.

Peeking through the door he could see the soft rays of the sun streak through the slits in the closed blinds to rest on the poor boy's small face. His breathing was heavy and hard, his skin quite pale, and the damp from his fever wet his pajama top. But, snuggled under the bed he should stay.

"Poor thing," Dad whispered to himself, and as though it were a reminder of how important his knitting was, quickly went back to his yarn to finish his project.

Just when it was too dark to see, at just the point the light in the room went grey, the teddy bear was complete. With some sewing here, tucking there, and embroidering quaint little eyes above his muzzle, the soft thing was finally finished and ready to give. Dad said with a smile, "This is JUST what Jackson needs to make him feel better."

He didn't dare wake Jackson while he slept. Rest was the best medicine for the moment, the only thing that worked. His sad illness was draining so much from him. So, Dad let Jackson sleep, and tenderly set the teddy bear beside him in bed.

When Jackson woke the next morning, he made his usual grimaces. We all hate mornings, but Jackson's were often different than many of ours. He would wake with a slight shake in his face, a twist in his brow, a heavy sigh. Mornings meant medicine, lot's of medicine, so much horrible tasting medicine that his lips would pierce just thinking about it.

As he rolled over in bed he saw the most adorable little teddy bear just quietly sitting there beside him. Jackson clutched him with glee, holding him close to his chest, forgetting all about the medicine.

As Dad came in to bring Jackson's morning tray of medicine he found the boy squeezing the knit teddy bear close to his chest, sitting upright in bed with a cheerful grin. "Hey, little man," Dad said laughing, "it's been a long time since I've seen you smile! Do you like him?"

Jackson asked anxiously, "Where did he come from?"

"I don't know," he said so happy to see his child finally in good spirits. "He was probably roaming around the woods and heard there was a little boy in need of some company."

"Who do you think told him?"

"Probably the rabbits. You know they like to gossip. They run around the fields and meadows twitching their little noses and spreading news."

Jackson squeezed the little bear even tighter and said, "I sure am glad he came. I want to name him Teddy."

"Are you sure?"

"Why not?" He was curious. Shouldn't all teddy bears be named Teddy?

"I think this one is special. He deserves a different name."

"Well, what do you think I should call him?"

"What does your heart tell you?"

Jackson paused, looked at the little bear for an awfully long time, and as if looking into his eyes said, "The little sick boy's bear." There came the pout, the bear slowly lowered to his lap, Jackson's face drawing scared.

Dad held him quickly. "Jax, we're going to make you well again. I promise. We're going to do everything we can." And even Dad was trying his best to believe it, too. "Don't name him just yet. Name him when you feel it's right. When the name just pops into your heart, not into your heard. And call him whatever you want."

"Can I call him 'Fearless Lord Crocodile Killer?'"

Dad giggled and said, "If that's truly what your heart tells you, then yes. By all means.....but, remember, only if that's what your heart tells you."

Jackson had his shy morning breakfast. A simple piece of toast, a fried egg, a glass of juice, and spoonful after spoonful of the most repulsive medicine you

could have ever imagined. It tasted like how the bottom of his fishing box smelled and looked like the muddy edge of the creek he threw stones in.

Soon after, Jackson grew drowsy, as the medicine began doing its work. He softly laid on his back, brought the little teddy bear to his chest, as his labored breathe lifted and dropped the little knit bear's head in a comforting rhythm as he slowly went to sleep.

And that, my friends, is when the magic began....

Chapter 2

The little bear slowly, and every so cautiously lifted his head so he would disturb Jackson. He sniffed the sleeping boy, as a bear should do. "Oh, no," he whispered. "He's sick. Bad sick."

He quietly pulled his paws off of Jackson, but with just a little rustle of the boy's movement, the bear went limp and fell back into place. When he thought Jackson had gone back to sleep again, the bear rose and sat at the edge of the bed looking tenderly back.

"That's so sad," said the little bear shaking his head. Suddenly, Jackson rolled over with a groan, his scrawny arm grabbing the little bear and pulling him tightly against his chest.

"OOOMPH!" exclaimed the little bear as quietly as he could.

Twisting his mouth a little he thought, "I could stay here for a moment. Yes, I could just lay here for a moment....but, I would rather be doing something to help him. I need to do *something* to help him."

Finally, he said it out loud. "I wish I knew what was wrong with him."

It sounded like the growl of an approaching thunder storm: a deep, rolling voice heard in the corner of the room. "He's sick," the voice said.

"Who said that?"

"I did." Oh, and what a voice it was, the kind that causes the timber of the woods to tremble.

"Who are you?"

"Who are *you*?" Asked the voice in return.

The little bear stopped for a moment before realizing the only answer he could give was the truth. "He didn't give me a name yet."

"Not even *Teddy*?"

"Nope. You said the boy was sick?"

“Yes. He’s been sick for a long while....” Out from the shadows strolled with regal perfection and heroic gate a knit lion..... “And he doesn’t seem to be getting any better.”

The little bear was stunned at the sight. He was orange and majestic, with a big brown crown of a mane that proved how important he was. And the way he glided across the room towards the little bear showed remarkable grace.

“Wow...,” was all the little bear could say under his little breath.

“My name is Lionheart.” The lion stood proud before the little bear. And if lion’s could smile, he would have. But, lions are serious and stern. Smiling can sometimes make their snouts ache.

The little bear, slightly intimidated by Lionheart’s presence had a thought. “How could he get sick with YOU around? Can’t you scare away the illness?”

“I can’t roar and chase his illness away. It doesn’t work like that.” The lion’s long tale swung around with a gliding ease to rest before him.

“Well, if you can’t do something, maybe I can. I can at least *try* to do something. ANYTHING!” The little bear said this while trying to wrestle his way out of Jackson’s grasp.

“If you keep squirming like that, he’ll wake up. He needs to rest, so you wouldn’t be helping him very much.”

“How do I get out so I can help him?”

“Maybe I can assist you.” Lionheart took a deep breath, closed his eyes, his chest expanding mightily and grand, and the little bear just knew he was about to hear the roar of a lifetime, a roar so penetrating and deep that the little bears stuffing might shake. Instead, Lionheart just growled....It was a soft and steady growl, but by no means simple.

Suddenly, Jackson took a deep breath of his own, rolled over, letting the little bear go, and with a sigh went back to sleep on his other side.

Lionheart slowly strolled to the other side of the bed and said in Jackson’s sad ear, “Stay brave little one.”

The little bear looked at Lionheart inquisitively. “What did you mean by that?”

“A roar can’t chase away an illness. But, bravery can. As long as he stays brave, he can fight this and win. That’s why I’m here. *That* is why I am Lionheart. Dad

made me to remind him to stay brave. I stand here never ceasing in my duty. You don't need a lot of noise to remind someone to be brave. Sometimes a little growl does the trick. Look at how he's sleeping now. Somewhere in his little heart he's fighting his illness with bravery. Somewhere in his dreams, he is a proud warrior fending off pain."

Lionheart lifted his chin, so proud of his work, so steadfastly impressed at how well Dad had knit him. "It's all I can do, but I promise you little bear, it is the BEST that I can do."

So touched, so heartfelt, the little bear said with absolute certainty, "I think I can do something, too. I just don't know what that is."

"We shall see, little bear, we shall see."

Chapter 3

Lionheart asked, "You're free now, little bear. What are you going to do to help him?"

The little bear couldn't think of anything. His heart was filled, of course, with a need to help Jackson, but somehow he couldn't make those feelings into words that made sense to Lionheart. Do you ever have that feeling? You can't say the words, but you know your heart is loudly, proudly, shouting precisely what it should be?

He stumbled and stuttered, "Well, because.....it's like this.... I want to.....shouldn't I? I don't know....it's just a feeling that I have to do something to help him."

The little bear heard a faint flapping sound in the corner. Lionheart's gaze shifted quickly to that direction. His keen perceiving ears twisted toward the noise.

The little bear lowered his voice. "What was that?"

There it was again. *Flapthhhh. Flappitty flappth*. No! Wait! Now he could hear it a third time. This strange *flippity flappity flupity* noise floating through the air.

"Quickly," said Lionheart in a hush, "under the covers! GO! NOW!"

The little bear did as he was told, Lionheart rushing under the bed and whispering in that deep of tone of his that reverberated the room, "Don't make a noise. Stay quiet and hidden. Do you understand, little bear? Don't let them see you!"

"Who???"

"The Moths...."

The little bear peeked from out of the covers to see a dainty little moth dance rapidly through the sunbeams in the room. He landed there for a moment, then over here for a second, then flightily dashed all over the room.

The little bear asked Lionheart what that was. "It's so strange, so small, why are we hiding from it?"

“Oh, you have much to learn little bear. That’s a moth. He’s not alone, either. There are many of them out there. They like this time of day. They love the sunlight.”

“Why should I be afraid of something so small?”

“Because he, my friend, can eat you alive.”

The little bear was amazed at the moth’s glowing wings rapidly flapping with such a speed. They looked like spinning jewels. The delicate thing would bounce and flutter, dashing through the room, never quite pleased at what it had seen.

“He’s looking for us,” Lionheart growled.

“Why us?”

“Because the moths love to feed on knitted things.”

“Can’t you roar and make him go away?”

“Oh, no. I don’t want him to know I’m here either.”

“I thought you said you were brave.”

“Knowing the truth is brave, little bear, and the truth is, he can have us for dinner. I lost a good friend to the moths the last time they were here. I shall not lose another.”

The little bear covered under the blanket, pulling the cover over his head and curling close to Tad’s body. “Let me know when he’s gone,” said the little bear.

The moth then flew slowly closer to the blanket, hovering just above where the little bear was hiding. Resting in mid air, its elegant wings flittering so quickly, it simply stared at the piled mound of blanket where the little bear recoiled with fear.

Poof! Suddenly the moth was gone, dashing out of the room, back out of the window and into the glaring sun, but not before reeling itself back in one last time to take a second look....

