

# THE LITTLE BLUE BEAR

---

“Granny, please tell me a story,” said the little girl.

“Very well,” said Granny. “But you must listen carefully.”

“Yes, Granny. I’ll listen.”

“A long time ago,” began Granny, “there was a little boy with golden hair. And this boy had a little blue bear. It was only a toy bear, but it loved honey and was always smiling. The golden-haired boy took the little blue bear with him, everywhere he went.”

“Why?” asked the little girl.

“Because,” smiled Granny, “that boy loved his little blue bear more than anything in the world.”

“What happened to them?” asked the little girl.

“Well,” said Granny, “one day the golden-haired boy took his bear for a walk, and was careless. He found a big pine tree, and was so busy playing football with the pinecones that he didn’t notice his bear had fallen out of his backpack. When he got home, the little blue bear was nowhere to be found.”

“Oh no,” said the little girl. “What did the little boy do?”

“Well,” said Granny, “he was terribly upset – so upset, it seemed his golden hair had lost all its shine. He cried a bit, yes; but he didn’t give up. He remembered the pine tree and he went back there, hoping to find the bear. Back and forth he went, retracing his steps, from his house to the pine tree, from the pine tree to his house.”

“And did he find his bear?” asked the little girl.

“No,” said Granny sadly. “The little blue bear had completely disappeared.”

“Oh no!” exclaimed the little girl. “Granny – what happened to the bear? Did the foxes eat him?”

“No,” said Granny. “The foxes didn’t eat him. You see, a kind old lady was walking near the pine tree and she saw the little blue bear lying there on the ground, all sad and frightened. The old lady saw, at once, that this wasn’t a bear that had just been thrown away, unloved. She picked it up, brushed it off, and spoke to it gently. ‘Hello,’ she said, ‘do you want to come home with me? I will care for you.’ The little blue bear was afraid to be left alone again, and thought hard about going home to the old lady’s house. But he loved the golden-haired boy and would not forget him. ‘Thank you,’ he said, ‘but I love a golden-haired boy. He will come looking for me.’ ‘Are you sure?’ said the kind old lady. ‘What if the golden-haired boy has forgotten you? I have a warm fire and oodles of honey you can eat. Come home with me.’ ‘Thank you,’ said the little bear, ‘but my golden-haired boy won’t forget. He’ll come back for me, I know it. Please leave me on that branch over there, where he’ll see me.’ So the kind old lady did as the little bear asked, and carefully sat him on a low branch where the boy would see him.”

“What happened next?” asked the little girl.

“Well,” said Granny, “it was already getting dark, but the golden-haired boy wouldn’t give up. Again, he went back to the pine tree, but this time he looked in every direction, in case someone had found the bear and put him somewhere safe. And there, sure enough, in the dim light, was the little blue

bear on the low branch. The golden-haired boy couldn't contain himself. His heart jumped in his chest, like a tiny bird glad to be alive."

"Oh, that is such good news," said the little girl.

"Yes," said Granny. "Very good news. The golden-haired boy looked up at the one bright star in the evening sky and said 'thank you' out loud. He ran straight home and asked his family to light the big white candle they'd been keeping in the drawer for something very special. Together, the family lit the candle in thanks for a person they'd probably never meet: that kind stranger who'd found the little blue bear and put it somewhere safe. All that night, the big white candle burned quietly in the house; and all night long, the golden-haired boy cuddled his little bear. Now," said Granny, "you've heard my story. What did you learn?"

"Granny, I learned that sometimes we lose the things we love."

"Good," said Granny. "Is there anything else you learned from my story?"

"Yes. I learned that when you lose something important, you mustn't give up."

"Good," said Granny. "Is there anything else you learned from my story?"

"Yes. I learned that strangers can sometimes be the ones that help us. Like that kind old lady who found the little blue bear, listened to it, and put it on the low branch for the golden-haired boy to find. Like all those wonderful strangers – people we'll probably never meet – who plant trees for us to enjoy, who make the parks for us to play in, who make our clothes or build the houses we live in."

"Very good," said Granny. "Is there anything else you learned from my story?"

"Yes. I learned that if someone really loves you, they will try to find a way back to you – like the little blue bear telling the old lady not to take him to her house, even though there was oodles of honey there."

"Very good," said Granny. "Is there anything else you learned from my story?"

"Yes. I learned that when something you love comes back to you, it's good to say thank you – like the little boy did, with his family, when they lit the big white candle."

"Very good," said Granny. "Is there anything else you learned from my story?"

The little girl thought hard. "Yes, Granny. I learned that if something you love *can't* come back to you, you can still trust it will be alright. If the little blue bear had gone to live with the kind old lady, everything would have been alright, wouldn't it?"

"Yes," said Granny, "it would have been alright. Is there anything else you learned from my story?"

The little girl thought harder. "Yes, Granny. I learned that when something you love *does* come back to you, your heart jumps in your chest, like a bird glad to be alive."

"You have learned so much," said Granny. "And now, what did you learn, most of all, from my story?"

The little girl thought hard. She thought as hard as she could. And then she stopped thinking altogether. "Yes... yes, Granny. I learned that if something you love can't come back to you, even if it seems you've lost it forever, even *then*... you can still let your heart jump in your chest, like a tiny red bird glad to be alive."

Granny smiled. "Good," she said, holding the little girl close. "That is so very good."