

I'll Always be There for You

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INT. BOBBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

BOBBY is a young boy of about 7 playing with wooden train cars on the floor of a dingy, run down bedroom.

On the flimsy bed sits a small teddy bear, positioned as though it were staring out over the room.

We hear the sound of glass breaking and a man yelling in the next room. Bobby looks worried, and runs over to the bed and hugs the teddy bear.

The bear has a distinctive blue-gemstone-adorned medallion pinned to its chest.

The bedroom door swings open and HOWARD staggers in. Howard is a slender man in his 30's with greasy hair and a thin mustache.

HOWARD

What the hell are you doing in here? Clean this crap up!

Howard kicks one of the toys on the floor.

Bobby stares up at Howard, stunned and silent.

HOWARD

Get your ass in bed! I swear, Bobby, you're nothing but a pain in the ass to me. You think cause she's gone that makes you some kind of special citizen?

We see the eyes of the teddy bear glimmering with the reflection of Howard swaying about the room.

HOWARD

We all got freakin' problems! I got problems right now!

Howard stumbles towards the door.

HOWARD

Biggest mistake I ever made!

We see the eyes of the bear while hearing the sound of Howard tripping and cursing.

The door slams shut.

Bobby cuddles the teddy bear, rocking back and forth.

(CONTINUED)

BOBBY
I hate Howard!

Bobby holds up the teddy bear in front of him.

BOBBY
Teddy, Mommy said she'd always
keep us safe.

Bobby touches the medallion, his eyes wide with wonder. The silver and blue reflection of the piece sparkles in his eyes.

In the eyes of the Teddy Bear, we see a brief, barely noticeable flash of sapphire blue.

BOBBY
I know. I miss Mommy too.

FLASHBACK - EXT. CARNIVAL - DAY

Bobby, appearing 2-3 years younger, and TAMARA, a woman in her late 20's are holding hands and walking through a carnival, past various booths.

They walk past one particular booth which has several targets set up and a row of stuffed animals. A middle-aged GYPSY WOMAN is running the booth.

GYPSY WOMAN
Free play for the handsome young
man!

TAMARA
You hear that, sweetie? You
want to play this game?

BOBBY
Yeah!

GYPSY WOMAN
Just try to get this ball right in
the middle there.

TAMARA
You see the circle in the middle,
Bobby?

Bobby carefully ponders his shot and throws. The ball hits the bullseye right on target.

(CONTINUED)

TAMARA
Yay! You got it, baby!

BOBBY
Yay!!

GYPSY WOMAN
(laughs)
You win the special prize!

Howard walks up, drinking from a large paper cup.

HOWARD
(annoyed)
You ready yet?

TAMARA
In a minute, Howard. Bobby just
won a prize!

HOWARD
Well that's friggin' great. But we
gotta go. Like right now.

TAMARA
I know, OK.

HOWARD
Hurry up is all I'm sayin'. Horses
aint gonna bet on themselves.

The Gypsy Woman directst an intensely deep stare at Howard and scowls. She takes a lone teddy bear from the row of prizes and hands it to Bobby.

GYPSY WOMAN
This is a very special
bear. Strong magic, good for
family-

CLOSE UP of bear's face and eyes

GYPSY WOMAN(CONT.)
...and comfort.

Bobby is holding the bear face to face. He is fascinated by the teddy.

TAMARA
Oh, Thank you so much, I should at
least pay you something.

(CONTINUED)

GYPSY WOMAN

No, no, is my pleasure! Please! The bear is good for him. Please take!

TAMARA

Thank you!

HOWARD

(Yelling)

We're going!

Howard storms off.

The Gypsy woman watches as Howard leaves, giving him another intensely deep scowl.

Tamara takes Bobby's hand and the two of them hurry after Howard.

We see the eyes of the teddy bear up close in Bobby's arms as they walk away.

END FLASHBACK

INT. HOWARD'S KITCHEN - DAY

Howard enters the kitchen, hair messed up, dark circles under his bloodshot eyes, and gingerly shuffles over to the refrigerator.

Grabs a beer from the fridge, opens it, and takes a sizable gulp.

Bobby is nearby, in the living room. He is sitting on the floor, watching cartoons and playing with his wooden train cars, one of which is now broken.

Howard sits down at the kitchen table and examines a small stack of papers.

HOWARD'S POV

We see a legal document in Howard's hands. At the top is the title "The Robert J Evans II, Beneficiary of Tamara Evans Trust".

Near the top, in the body text, we also see the words "Howard Bemont, hereinafter referred to as 'THE TRUSTEE'."

Our focus shifts from the paper to b.g., where Bobby is playing by the TV in the living room.

There is a knock on front door.

(CONTINUED)

PAN from Bobby to front door.

END POV

Howard opens the door and there is BUDDY a heavy-set middle-aged man. His clothing and grooming are tidy, budget-conscious and spartan.

HOWARD

Hey.

BUDDY

How ya doin'?

HOWARD

Yeah, give me a minute.

Howard closes the door in front of buddy.

HOWARD

Bobby, go to your room.

Bobby keeps playing with his toys.

Howard angrily marches over to Bobby and grabs him roughly by the arm. Bobby grunts in discomfort.

HOWARD

When I fuckin' tell you to go your room, you. Get. Up. And. Go-

Howard lifts Bobby, dangling by the arm, and hurriedly carries him towards his room. His grip presses into Bobby's skin.

HOWARD(CONT.)

To-

Howard opens up Bobby's bedroom door.

HOWARD(CONT.)

Your-

INT. BOBBY'S BEFROOM - DAY

Howard forcefully throws Bobby into the room. Bobby falls and hits the floor.

HOWARD(CONT.)

Room!!

Howard slams the door shut.

(CONTINUED)

Bobby is laying on the floor, curls into the fetal position and starts crying.

The teddy bear is on the bed. Its eyes briefly shine blue.

INT. HOWARD'S GARAGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Howard and Buddy enter the garage.

They walk past a calendar on the wall, set to the month of September.

They sit down at a dusty card table. Buddy blows and brushes dust off from his side of the table.

We see that Howard has a copy of Tamara's last will and testament and a quarterly account statement for Bobby's Trust fund.

HOWARD

I don't understand none of this stuff.

BUDDY

You can leave the technicals to me. I'll just need your signature when I'm done.

Howard hands the papers to Buddy.

BUDDY

You're sure you want to do this now?

HOWARD

(defensive, like a guilty teenager)
It's for him too!

Buddy tilts his head slightly and looks Howard intently in the eyes.

HOWARD

Fuck off! We need the money right now!

BUDDY

Whatever floats your boat.

Buddy gathers up the papers and stands up. Holding the stack of papers, he examines the top sheet.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

Tamara. That's a nice name.

Howard's look turns contemplative.

FLASHBACK - INT. TAMARA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tamara, clearly agitated, is going through dresser drawers and her closet, picking clothing items and stuffing them into a black trash bag on the bed. Men's underwear, white socks, jeans, T-shirts, flannel shirts.

Howard walks in, wearing a white T shirt and a pair of boxer shorts.

HOWARD

What are you doin', Tammy?

TAMARA

This is the last straw, Howard.

Howard scratches his head, uncomfortably looks around the room.

HOWARD

You're still pissed off about this?
Whatever happened to morning aft-

TAMARA

Pissed off?! I'm scared, Howard!
I'm scared for my son. I'm scared
for you!

HOWARD

I know, Baby, I'm sorry. But
that's why I need you! I need you
to help me!

Tamara pauses for a beat or two, then resumes packing Howard's clothing into the bag.

HOWARD

Look at me, Tamara!

Tamara looks up from the bed, tears streaming down her cheeks.

HOWARD

I love you! I love Bobby! I
promise, I promise I will never do
anything to hurt you or the kid.
Ever again.

Howard reaches out and gently touches Tamara's shoulders.

(CONTINUED)

Tamara looks away.

TAMARA

Oh God, I can't keep doing this.
(sobbing)
You really mean it this time?

Howard nods.

TAMARA

You'll go to counseling?

HOWARD

I'll do whatever it takes.

TAMARA

This is the last time, though,
Howard. I mean it.

Howard and Tamara embrace. Tamara cries heavily.

HOWARD

Thank you so much!

Howard, eyes closed, nuzzles and kisses her hair.

HOWARD

(eyes closed)
Honestly, Tammy, I don't know
what I'd be like without you.

Howard opens his eyes while the pair is still hugging. His expression turns worried. His gaze distant.

END FLASHBACK

INT. BOBBY'S BEDROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Bobby is unconscious on the floor in the fetal position. The carpet is wet under his closed eyes.

The silver and blue medallion on the teddy bear's chest is gleaming even in the dull interior light.

We see the bear's eyes briefly shine blue.

The teddy grows larger and larger, metamorphosing.

After the dramatic transformation, we see a large, full sized teddy bear. It is big, soft and cuddly, but with altered "grown-bear" proportions and a somewhat lumpy look to it compared to the smaller version of itself.

(CONTINUED)

It softly rumbles with a very deep but soothing, cooing sound.

The bear gently lifts Bobby onto the bed, tenderly strokes his head, straightening his hair and wiping his tear-streaked face with its upholstery fur while continuing to coo.

It tucks Bobby in. Bobby rolls on his side and cuddles the blanket, still asleep.

We see the giant teddy bear's face from underneath, with tender affection in its eyes. It reaches down and gently pets Bobby.

Bobby breathes deeply.

FADE OUT

INT. HOWARD'S GARAGE - NIGHT

We see the calendar on the wall. It is October.

Howard walks up, picks up the phone and dials.

We hear a few muffled rings from the phone while Howard waits.

BUDDY(O.S.)
(muffled)
Hello.

HOWARD
Yeah, so what's up?

BUDDY
All ready to go. Just need your
John Hancock.

Howard starts swinging the spiral phone cord with his fingers

HOWARD
Sweet! I'll be right over,
Motherfucker!

BUDDY
Uh, yeah. Just one other
thing. You know I'm really putting
myself out on a limb here, and I
think I need something up front
(beat)before we push this forward
with the brokerage. Just in case,
you know...

(CONTINUED)

Howard lets go of cord and starts pacing back and forth, stretching the limits of the cord.

HOWARD

Well shit! Why the fuck didn't you tell me that a month ago? I got nothin' right now!!

BUDDY

Well, you want it or not? I'm sure you can come up with something.

Howard slams the phone down.

HOWARD

Fuckin' son of a bitch!!!

INT. BOBBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Howard storms into room, turns on light.

He starts rummaging through items on the dresser and emptying drawers, examining things then quickly tossing them aside.

He sees the gleam of Tamara's medallion out of the corner of his eye.

Bobby is in bed, eyes wide open, holding the teddy bear, medallion on its chest.

Howard grabs the teddy bear.

BOBBY

(Holding on to teddy)

No!

Howard examines the medallion, then starts fiddling with and pulling on it, stretching the bear fabric in the process.

All the while, Bobby is screaming, trying to pull the bear away from Howard.

Howard rips the bear out of Bobby's grip and it flies across the room.

Howard strikes Bobby, grabs him by the shoulders, and forcefully throws him back onto the bed.

Bobby's head hits a bed post and he goes unconscious.

Behind Howard, The teddy bear's eyes flash blue, then go dark.

(CONTINUED)

From behind, we see the teddy start to grow larger.

Howard lightly shakes the unconscious Bobby.

CLOSE UP of back of bear's head as it tilts forward, making room for a large hump of muscle forming in the back of its neck.

EXTREME CLOSE UP of bear's paw, as the sharp tips of claws begin to emerge.

We hear a deep massive grizzly bear growl. Howard, still bent over the bed looking at Bobby, shows an expression of surprise and uncertainty.

Howard slowly turns around. His expression turns to shock and horror.

HOWARD'S POV

CLOSE UP of bear's chest with the medallion pinned on it.

CLOSER ON MEDALLION, which is engraved with the words "I'll always be there for you."

FLASHBACK - INT. HOSPITAL BED- NIGHT

EXTREME CLOSE UP of the medallion and words.

PULL BACK to reveal it is pinned on Tamara's chest, who is laying on a hospital bed with Bobby and his teddy by her side.

Howard is sitting on a chair, watching the pair from across the room. He looks depressed and slightly absent. A beer can wrapped in a brown paper bag by his side.

Tamara takes the medallion from her chest and hands it to Bobby:

TAMARA

This is a gift for you Bobby, so you can always remember me. Can you read that?

BOBBY

It says umm, I-I, ill

TAMARA

I'll

BOBBY

I'll ... um al- always. I'll
always be the- ther-there
...for...you.

(looks up at Tamara)

I'll always be there for you...

TAMARA

That's right sweetie, because even
though you might not see me
anymore, I will still be there for
you!

BOBBY

Like a guardian angel?

TAMARA

(weeping but smiling)

Yes, just like that.

BOBBY

(Crying)

I don't want you to go, Mommy!

TAMARA

I know. Give me a hug, baby.

Howard wipes a tear from his eye.

Bobby and Tamara hug. The Medallion slips out of Bobby's
hand onto Tamara's bedsheet.

CLOSE ON MEDALLION.

END FLASHBACK

HOWARD'S POV (CONT.)

EXTREME CLOSE UP of medallion on bear's chest.

PULL BACK to reveal the teddy bear grown to full-size
grizzly bear proportions. It somewhat recognizable as the
teddy, except it has sharp teeth, huge claws, angry eyes,
and an extremely menacing look to it.

END POV

The teddy/grizzly bear roars and swipes at Howard. Howard
is struck, screams and tumbles across the room.

Now bleeding with a ripped and shredded shirt, Howard
staggers to his feet and runs out the door, leaving a trail
of blood.

The teddy/grizzly lumbers after Howard.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Howard runs out into the street towards his rusty, low-end sedan, gets in and locks the door.

As he is fumbling with his keys, the bear runs up to the car, roaring.

The car violently rocks when the bear slams into the side. Howard drops his keys.

The bear peels the roof of the car up like aluminum foil, then presses its claws down on the top of the rolled up driver side window. The window shatters almost instantly.

Howard covers his face as glass flies.

The bear rips the drivers door clean off its hinges and tosses it aside.

HOWARD'S POV

We the medallion one more time, then the bear's face. It is staring us in the eyes, with a grinding, flaring scowl. Sub-audible growling.

END POV

Howard now has a look of realization mixing in with his mortal terror.

HOWARD

Na-no! (gasps) Please! I'm sorry!

The bear grinds its teeth. Its eyes deepen with rage. Nostrils flare and quiver. A powerful snarl.

Howard flinches and squeaks in terror.

HOWARD

Bu-but it was all for- it was all gonna be for him. I, I-

The bear lowers its head and bares its teeth. A deep, building growl.

HOWARD

(face becoming desperate, angry)

You can't kill me!!

(tears)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD (cont'd)
I take care of the fuckin' brat!
(briefly face-palms)
No-wait, I mean, I mean he's
a good ki-

Growl building to roar. With impossible rage on its face, the bear opens its mouth and raises its enormous claw for a swipe.

HOWARD
(covering face)
No! NOOOOOOOOOOOO-

We see the back of bear over the car as it mauls Howard. The car rocks and shakes with the violence. Blood-curdling screams from Howard, and terrifying roars and snarls from the bear.

EXT. STREET, CRIME SCENE - DAY

2 DETECTIVES are standing over the wrecked car and mutilated corpse of Howard, while police officers and forensics experts work around them.

DETECTIVE 1
No one saw anything, but a few of the neighbors said they heard what sounded like a wild animal. Man, that is ugly. You ever seen anything this gruesome before?

DETECTIVE 2
Yeah.
(sighs)
Once. When I was a park ranger in Montana years ago. There was this guy camping up there with the Grizzlies. He was one of those eco-hippie conservationist types. Wanted to film the bears, make a documentary.

DETECTIVE 1
I can already see where this is headed...

DETECTIVE 2
Right! So one morning I'm making the rounds and find this guy's body. A bear had gotten him. Had never seen so much gore in my life. The bear had stripped the meat off
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DETECTIVE 2 (cont'd)
of his legs like they were chicken
wings. Not too far off from
this...

DETECTIVE 1
Whoo! No bear sightings today
though?

DETECTIVE 2
Nope. Nothing. A total and complete
mystery.

DETECTIVE 1
Halloween. Go figure. So what's
going to happen to the kid?

DETECTIVE 2
The Stepfather was his only next of
kin. Both his natural parents are
dead. He'll have to go into foster
care. Maybe someday a family will
pick him up.

DETECTIVE 1
(shakes his head)
Poor kid. What a shame. Such an
ugly ugly situation.

We see Bobby sitting in a nearby police car with his teddy
bear.

We see a tiny bit of blood on the tips of its paws.

Bobby licks his fingers and cleans the blood off the bear
paw, just as a counselor walks up and sits down next to him.

FADE OUT

THE END