

GOLD FINALIST AWARD

An Amusing Story
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The sky was dark and empty at first, like a blank canvas, but it seemed as though the stars took that as a challenge, for not even a minute had passed before the sky was dotted with stars, shining brighter than ever. Usually, I would spend my night marvelling at the beauty of the world, but tonight, this posed a threat to me.

Tonight is my son's wedding anniversary, and he is taking his wife out on a date, so naturally, I have to take care of my granddaughter, Lia. However, Lia is obsessed with the Disney films 'Frozen' and 'Frozen II', and she refuses to go to bed because, according to her, "The sky's awake, so I'm awake. So, we have to play!"

"You'll have plenty of time to play tomorrow, Lia! I'm not lying." Yesterday was the end of her first term, so she would have a whole week to goof around. "But grandmaaaaa," she dragged out the syllable as if that was going to magically make me change my mind. "No 'buts' little lady. Off to bed now," I sternly said. "Fine! But, you must tell me a story first." Well, I can work with that.

She snuggled into her bed sheets and looked up at me expectantly. I looked up at the stars. One caught my eye, it was dimmer than the ones surrounding it, but it caught my eye, nonetheless. I looked at Lia, grinning. "How about instead of another princess story, I tell you about someone amazing from my childhood?." She cocked her head to the side, curiosity filling her eyes. "Someone you knew?" I nodded. "Okay!" she replied cheerfully.

"It was the summer of 1943..." Lia gasped. "That long ago?" I smiled at her and nodded before continuing, "This was during World War II. A young woman named Rose went to pick up rations. She stared at the bread in her basket. She usually baked it herself as baking was her passion, but the rations were tight, so she could not. Just as she was walking out, a young man named John bumped into her-" "They fall in love, don't they?" Lia questioned, and I smiled at how fast she caught on.

"Yes, darling and they got married two years later. Life was perfect for Rose. She had a loving husband and a beautiful house where she would bake for hours. But one day, John was deployed to fight in a war. A week after, Rose found out she was pregnant. She excitedly waited for her husband to return to tell him the good news. Every day she sat on the porch looking out for him until finally, the military vehicle she had been waiting for, arrived.

Except it wasn't John who stepped out. It was a man from the military. He gave her a letter and whispered a barely audible "*I'm sorry for your loss*" before leaving." Lia looked at me, her eyes wide as she whispered, "He died?" I nodded sadly. "She didn't expect death to part them this soon; no one did. Rose cried for weeks until she felt nothing but numbness, and that's when she felt it. A fluttery feeling in her stomach. Her baby kicked!"

"Huh? Oh! I forgot that she was pregnant. What is she going to do now?" Lia asked. "Well, you weren't the only one that forgot about her baby; she did too! But now that she remembered, she decided to do everything she could to ensure her baby would have the best life possible. She only used half the money the military had given her, leaving the rest as savings for her daughter.

Throughout the year, everyone told her to remarry as it would be easier to raise a child with the help of a husband, but she ignored them. She ignored the gossipers who sneered at her every time she walked past. She ignored the elders who said a woman couldn't raise a child and pay the bills. She ignored them while raising her daughter, making sure her daughter was loved and knew everything about her father. Years later, her daughter grew up to become a noble and brave young woman, and they lived happily ever after."

Lia's eyes drooped, but she forced them open and asked, "Who is Rose?" I kissed her forehead. "She was my mother," I whispered as she finally gave in and fell asleep.