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His Name is Rex

When I was seven months pregnant with my daughter De'Anna, I received an unexpected box through UPS delivery. The UPS driver was kind enough to bring the box all the way into my living room and put it by the couch. The box came up to my knees and was two feet by two feet. As I was signing for it, I noticed that it was from El Paso, Texas. I knew then it had come from home. I settled myself down on the couch and started the process of opening the box. I call it a process because my mother can really tape a box up. When I finally got through all the layers of tape and opened the flaps, the first thing I saw was the quilt; it was about the size of a throw blanket. I pulled it out to get a better look at it. I realized that some of the patches were from clothes that I had worn as a child. There were a few squares that I just could not place, so I assumed that they were put into it because she needed some fillers squares. I placed this quilt beside me on the couch.

Underneath this quilt was a smaller version of it with a note that had written on it "For baby." I pulled this one out with a little smile on my face and placed it on the couch also. Then I noticed the three preemie outfits that I had bought when my son was born, along with three different sizes of baby shoes. I thought that this was the end of the box. I called my mother to thank her for the baby items that she sent. My mother asked what I thought of the surprise. "It's very colorful" was my response. I asked her about the extra squares, and she told me that the pieces were from some of Nathan's, my son, clothes. Then she told me, "You have not finished with the box yet." I reached into the box, pushed the preemie clothes aside and found another box. It was

wrapped in the comics from the *El Paso Times* Sunday edition of the paper. I carefully opened it to save the paper. This box was easier to open, so I knew that she did not wrap it. Inside this box was a scruffy looking bear with brown fur. It had a plastic nose, two little plastic eyes and a small balding patch on the forehead. It looked vaguely familiar.

Underneath this bear was a letter from my son, who was nine. In this letter, he basically stated that this bear had helped to kill all the monsters in his dreams, and it was time to pass it on for tradition. I ask my mother what he meant by tradition. It was at this point, that my mother finally realized how much memory I did lose from the head injury. According to my mother, this was my little buddy, and I could not do without it when I was younger. When my son discovered it in the closet, he latched onto it to get him through his nightmares. It was a part of me he could hold onto while we were apart. His name is Rex. He sat on a shelf on my headboard for a long time.

One day, De'Anna was taking her nap on my bed. When she woke up, I watched as she adjusted herself to where she was at. She slowly started to move to the headboard where I had two stuffed animals sitting. She reached for Rex. She would always carry him around with her and slept better when he was near. The first word after the usual *dada* and *mama* was *Rex*; otherwise, she would just point for him. Watching De'Anna grow up with Rex always in tow, I could only imagine that it was the way I must have been with him. She would try to feed him her food all the time.

About the time that Kyra started to crawl around the floor is when Rex really started to go through some of his adventures. Kyra saw Rex sitting next to De'Anna, on the floor. They were watching *Sesame Street*, and De'Anna was trying to sing along with the program. Kyra was happily exploring this little treasure, and finally De'Anna notice Rex was gone. My goodness, this was when the fights and arguments started. It was "Waaaah" and "Mine" for many days. When

Kyra was ready to take Rex for her buddy, De'Anna was not ready to let him go. I suggested that she share Rex, so De'anna went and got the scissors to make two halves. That is where the scar on the belly came from. I finally took the girls to the store and, yes, Rex came with us. We went through the stuffed animal aisle, so we could find another bear to replace Rex for one of the girls, or both. De'Anna found a grayish-orange bear and picked it up; Kyra was not interested in any of them. De'Anna named this new bear Peaches.

As I sit here carefully performing yet another surgical procedure on Rex, my daughter Kyra, with tears on her cheeks, pats him so gently saying, "It will be alright. Mommy will fix you up." I realize that Rex has been through quite a bit, since 1995. He lost his tail in a battle with a bulldog, and now has a blue patch where the tail used to be. Whenever a rip happened on Rex, I would grab whatever thread I could find to sew it up quickly, so that the crying would stop. Rex no longer has eyes out of plastic; they fell of somewhere outside and could not be found. The eyes are green now and stitched on in thread. One day, Kyra saw these bears on television that you could write on, she thought it was cool. She hunted down some markers and started to color him, then her own self. It was permanent marker. For a week, both Kyra and Rex sported a blue and red splash of color on their stomach. Now only Rex does. Kyra finally realizes that Rex needs a bath once in a while; she just does not understand why Rex takes his bath in a washing machine. I am slowly weaning her off Rex. Kyra now has a stuffed dog whose name is Victoria who has only had two operations so far.

For now, I think it is time for Rex to get a well-deserved rest. When I finish stitching him up, I will put him on the shelf on my headboard. He should be fine there for two years, or until Nathan and his new wife start having children. Then his adventures will begin again.