

## Rescuing Roosevelt

Houses and trees whizzed by as Superman flew across the city. This was a time for heroes, and every second counted.

He fried a mailbox with his laser eyes. And another. Just because he could. The sun in the summer sky filled his body with invulnerability and general awesomeness. He picked up a car with just his right hand. And a firetruck with his left. He looked around for more, but couldn't find any.

"Mom, can we bring more cars next time?"

"Sure Tommy."

"Who's Tommy?"

"Sorry, Superman."

Moms. Can't live with 'em, not allowed to leave the Fortress of Solitude without 'em. Mom wasn't the fastest car on the road: she insisted on keeping Superman and Roosevelt "safe." If only she knew the vastness of his power. But Superman had learned to live with Mom's weaknesses. Her limited understanding of the world was well compensated by her spaghetti. Mom found a parking spot by the side of the street. She opened the door, and Superman performed his heroic landing to perfection.

*So, the grocery store again.* In the same spot last week he had met his arch nemesis, the evil Batman. She, too, had been accompanied by a sidekick: the Butler. Ready to confront the evil duo, Superman had cast an angry glare. The silly mask on her little face could barely conceal the evil in her eyes as she stared right back at Superman and Roosevelt. Was that her masterplan? Stealing his best friend?

*No you won't!* He had dashed across the parking lot to send the Dark Knight back to her foul cave. But Mom had yanked him back, snatching victory from his grasp. A car had passed right in front of him. Mom had gone into lecturing mode again, ignoring his loud protests and the furious look on his face. The villain had gotten away.

"Honey, do you want your teddy bear?"

*Roosevelt.* Superman would never leave him behind. They met on his second birthday, long before he knew about flying or stopping bullets. Roosevelt used to be just Teddy, until the museum trip with Dad. Superman had gotten an A and got to spend a whole week at Dad's place. They even went to the museum together. He'd had the best time ever, in spite of Dad's no-fly-zone orders. Together they had decided Teddy was a big bear now and old enough for a grownup name.

Teddy had become Roosevelt.

Roosevelt had lost a leg in that big war, freeing the slaves for the man with the hat. He was a real hero, just like Dad. Superman cared for the veteran, and carried him around everywhere. He was sure that Roosevelt loved him for it, and that it made Dad proud. Christmas had been great that year.

Roosevelt was a smart and curious bear. He asked Superman about all the other cars by the street. Superman ran to each one to show Roosevelt what was inside. This one had some big boxes in the back. That one had an empty child's seat. A dog barked in the other one. *Don't worry Roosevelt, I'll keep you safe. Nothing bad can happen as long as you're with me.*

"Keep up, honey."

*Sorry Roosevelt, our time's up.* Time to superdash back to Mom! Superman launched faster than a speeding bullet, his arms swinging back and forth with boundless power. Poor Roosevelt could not keep up and slipped out of Superman's hands. He flew high in the air, soared between the cars, and landed face down on the street. Superman turned around.

Mom yelled something from the steps of the store.

Superman saw his friend was in trouble.

This was a time for heroes.

Every second counted.

*Hang on, Roosevelt.*

*I'm on my way.*

He ran into –

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The green car came out of nowhere and sent the Man of Steel flying through the air. His head cracked on the street. His cape ripped from his shirt. The rough pavement scraped his face. His tummy ached. The sting in his neck hurt the most. *I can't breathe.* Blood poured out of his nose, down his cheeks. *Mom will have a tissue.*

The world went dark for Superman. He tried to get up but his body was tired. Far in the distance, Mom held his hand. She begged for a doctor. Why didn't she pick him up?

Sirens approached. Scissors cut his suit. He wanted to push them away but his arms had no strength. Cold hands prodded his belly, wet fingers felt his neck. Needles pierced Superman's skin. A bright light shone. He was sleepy. The pain faded away.

Then, at last, the Man of Tomorrow felt himself lifting off the ground.

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