



"you got a friend in
me."

For many years it has been known that whenever a child is born they are born with an imaginary friend that would be there for them until they are deemed unnecessary.

I, for one, was assigned to a little boy named Carter Elias Reynolds. He was my entire world. I watched him as he grew up to become the person that he is now today and I helped him through the bad times, celebrated the good times...

Then, all of that changed when he started to grow up. His life became easier as he started to grow and it was hard coming to terms that I was beginning to fade away. I wasn't the first person he talked to about anything anymore. The older my Carter got, the more he would ignore me and make due as if I was a book on his bookshelf collecting dust.

As I stare at him now I can't help but feel a bit emotional, he was decorating a nursery. Softly sighing and scratching his head at the confusing instructions caused me to smile sadly knowing full well how he used to be when he was younger.

"Quincy!" I heard a five year old Carter screech loudly "I need you!"

"Howdy ho Carter boy! With what can I help you with?" I responded with a large smile.

"I don't understand my math homework!" He said sighing softly and scratching his head at the multiple addition problems

"Sometimes I think they're picking on me, Quincy. They know I don't understand it..." he said sadly putting his head down on the small table where he was working "I don't think I'll ever smart, at least not like mommy and daddy."

I gasped. "Carter! How could you ever say that about yourself, buddy?"

He looked up at me with wide tear filled eyes and shrugged his shoulder.s

I bent down and gave him my signature bear hug.

"Now listen here Mr. Reynolds." I said in a goofy voice causing the small boy to giggle "you are very smart, and you'll be just as smart as your mommy and daddy, maybe even smarter one day! I know you can do it! You just have to focus on the problem."

Carter smiled, he wiped his tears and nodded his head ready to get to work.

"You have to... focus on the problem there buddy." I said softly, not wanting to startle him.

"Huh? What?" Carter said looking around until his eyes landed on my nearly transparent figure. "Oh, it's you. Right. Focus on the problem." he muttered and confronted reading the instructions to build a crib

I continued to look at him and I softly sighed, remembering what it was like when he really needed me. Perhaps I had stayed with him too long and it was I who got attached to him, not the other way around.

I mean he was a grown man now, he was married and getting ready for the arrival of his first child with the person that he loved.

I looked at Carter and looked around the room once more before I turned to leave and walk around the childhood home, reliving the memories as I passed through each room.

"Quincy!" Carter yelled running into his room giving me a hug as he came home from school, paper in hand

"Look! I did it! I made a 100!" He said showing me the paper with a golden star excitedly.

"Howdy Ho Carter! You did it buddy! I knew you could do it" I said returning the hug and giving him a wide toothy smile.

I walked towards the newly decorated living room and sat down on the couch and looked around, remembering one of the most impactful days in Carter's short seven years of life.

"Quincy?" I heard a small quivering voice call out "where are you?"

"I'm in the living room! What's wrong buddy?" I asked softly noticing his change in character.

He was quiet and I could tell that he had been crying.

He looked up at me with tears threatening to fall from his eyes again. "Well... Quincy. My doggie died today and I don't know what to do."

My heart sank and I pulled him into a hug allowing him to cry and let out all the sad emotions within him.

"It's okay Buddy, let it all out." I said softly as he continued to sob "It's going to be okay... I know that Sam was your best friend but he was getting old and you'd want him to be happy right?"

Carter sniffles and nodded his head against my chest.

"Yeah I know you do, so you have to be happy. He's in a better place, running around with another doggies, barking and playing. That wasn't something he could do anymore remember?"

Carter nodded sadly. I felt so bad, not knowing how to help him feel better. Then a light bulb switched on in my head.

"Hey Carter, I want you to try and do something with me. It's gonna help you feel better." I said softly taking his arms in mine and giving him a kind smile.

He gave me a confused look however agreed reluctantly "Alright... what are we gonna do then Quincy?"

I smiled and got into a superhero pose while Carter just stood there looking like I just grew a third head... I had to be careful with that, being an imaginary friend, anything was possible for Carter to do.

"Well, come on then. Pull the pose." I said excitedly waiting for him to mimic my actions.

"Why?"

"Just trust me, I know that you'll feel better." I said "I promise."

He did the pose and smiled "This is weird, Quincy!" he giggled

I laughed along with him and composed myself. "Well, Carter I want you to do this when times get sad and when you truly need it, okay?"

He nodded as he waited to know what exactly we were going to do in these ridiculous superhero poses.

"When you're sad, stand in a superhero pose and repeat the words of Christopher Robin. "You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem and smarter than you think." Okay?" I said with a loving smile

"Okay. So would now be the time to use it Quincy?" He asked

"Well, are you sad?" I asked him softly, already knowing the answer

He nodded softly but smiled as he grew more confident with his superhero pose he repeated the words. "I am braver than I believe, stronger than what I seem and smarter than I think."

"Good job buddy! Now believe it, hard times don't always last. Okay?"

"Okay!" He said happily and ran to give me a hug "I love you Quincy, you're my best friend."

My heart grew ten times and I hugged the smaller boy tighter. "I love you too, Carter."

I remembered that like it was just yesterday, when in reality it was almost twenty years ago.

I look down at my arms and legs noticing that they were almost invisible. *'Today is the day..'* I thought. Today would be the day where I was deemed unnecessary for Carter, I was already fading and I had overstayed my welcome... becoming too emotionally attached with my job.

I remembered the days where I was bright and full of color and happiness waiting for him to come home from school, and then as he got older, the days became longer and I could see all my color start to fade gradually.

I sighed wishing that those moments would have stayed the way that they were and that Carter had never really grown up.

Realizing how selfish I sounded, I snapped out of my thoughts and looked at the time.

5:30 pm the clock on the wall read with bright LED lights shining. *'The offices close at seven o'clock, I should probably start packing up my belongings and start to make my way back to be assigned to a new child. Who truly does need me?'*

By the time I finished packing it was 6:15... I had to do one more thing before I left.

"Carter? Where are you?" I asked softly searching through the quiet house

"I'm in here." He yelled coming out of the nursery covered in baby pink paint "what is it Quincy?" He said looking annoyed

"Oh, I just wanted to say goodbye... and thank you." I said with a sad smile turning to walk towards the back yard

"Wait, what? What do you mean goodbye?" Carter said shock evident in his voice as he followed me outside

Once outside I turned to face him and gave him a watery smile, trying to keep the tears that were threatening to fall in my eyes

That was my job, keep him happy and content.

"You don't need me anymore, see?" I pointed to my translucent body "I fade when the person I was assigned to doesn't need me anymore. You're all grown up now and I could not have been more proud of you."

"Wait! Quincy, I don't understand!" Carter said in rushed panic "Why are you fading? Where will you go?"

I thought back to when I first started to fade away from him. He was a teenager beginning middle school, which is usually when all of the imaginary friends are long gone. Not I though, I wanted to watch him grow up, *'maybe he would remember all the fun times we had on the weekends and I would stop fading! Right?'*

I hoped that it would be the case but it wasn't. He went from middle school to his freshmen year of high school, then he got his first job... then he graduated.. Got accepted into college and met a wonderful girl named Calliope Elaine Taylor. He graduated from college and got married and is now expecting his first child with her. I can see when I began to fade, he got busy... I just stuck along for too long.

"Quincy... Please don't go you're my best friend." Carter said breaking me out of my thoughts.

I looked at him and saw that Calliope was with him, comforting him. She and Carter both had tears streaming down their faces, not wanting to let go of their longtime friend.

I smiled at them both as I felt myself beginning to float in the air. *'Looks like it's time for me go..'*

"Hey buddy, remember what I told you? When bad times come what do you have to do?" I said with a large grin

Carter stared at me and looked over towards Calliope. They both looked at each other and got into superhero pose.

I smiled. "Say it until you believe it, one last time."

Through their sadness they both repeated the quote. "We are braver than we believe, stronger than we seem and smarter than we think."

"Good job." I said knowing it was my time to go.

"Quincy... I'm going to miss you" Carter said softly, Calliope nodding in agreement.

"I'm going to miss you too Carter, but don't be sad buddy... goodbyes aren't forever. You will see me again one day." I said almost completely gone.

"I love you Quincy!" Carter yelled finally through his tears

"I love you too Carter. Be good." I said as I finally finished fading.

It had been two months since Quincy had left and there were Calliope and Carter coming home from the hospital with their newborn daughter in hand.

"Welcome home Miss Harriet Quintel Reynolds." Carter said when he opened the front door to both he and Calliope's home.

"You named her after me?" They heard a familiar cheerful tone say once they walked into the living room.

They looked up in shock to see Quincy standing there with a large teddy bear, full of color and smiles. Just like Carter remembered seeing him as a small boy.

"Quincy?" Carter asked in shock

"Howdy ho buddy! I was assigned to be Miss Harriet's imaginary friend. I told you, didn't I?" Quincy said with a smile. "That we would see each other again someday?"

Carter, still in shock, ran to give Quincy a hug.

"I missed you so much!" Carter expressed squeezing Quincy lovingly

"I missed you too buddy!" Quincy said returning the hug "Now, let's meet the new member of the family shall we?"

End.