

"Mr. Jenkins and my Mother" by Alexaner Lee-Rekers - GUS - M - 20s+

Gus sits in his therapist's office, speaking more to himself than the professional listening.

GUS: I never told you about Mr. Jenkins?

Mr. Jenkins was my favourite teddy bear growing up. He had this smart, tartan bowtie and a short, shiny coat of fur. Very dapper. Always talked about working in the Bank for Bears, and growing his petunias. He could talk, you see. Not really talk, just a voice my mother would do for him. She gave him a nice English accent, and he always spoke in this hurried, half-whisper. They'd tuck me into bed every night, Mr. Jenkins and my mother, and make feel safe.

That was until she killed him. One day, a few weeks before my seventh birthday, I left the garden gate open and our dog Sampson escaped. That night, after my mother spent the day searching for the dog and bringing him home, she came up to my room alone. "Where's Mr. Jenkins?" I asked her. "Oh, sweetheart... The excitement of the day was too much for Mr. Jenkins. He was an old bear and he- His heart just gave out."

It was my first experience with death. My mother never said anything ... but I knew it was my fault. Worst part is she left him—his body, I suppose—on my pillow for when I woke up. Like the horse's head in *The Godfather*. He looked different. Lifeless.

I never forgot the garden gate again.