

## Laura on Life: A box for blankie

by Laura Snyder

My little boy is growing up. It's sad and exciting all at the same time.

Before he was born, so many years ago, I bought a baby blanket at a garage sale. It was brand new; still in the packaging. It was made of white flannel with blue satin trim around the sides and a little blue teddy bear embroidered on one corner. I didn't know, at the time, how much this little garage sale purchase would mean to my little boy after he was born.

This little blanket was wrapped around my son as we brought him home from the hospital. We took a hundred pictures of him that day and when the flash of the cameras became too much for him, he buried his little head in his new friend, who he eventually named "Blankie".

From that time on, Blankie was a constant fixture in my young son's life. He never sucked his thumb, but Blankie was always at his side. Blankie was in nearly every photograph we took of this child. Very rarely did my son cry out in the night and need to be comforted. He drew courage from his friend, Blankie.

No amount of reasoning could persuade my son from taking Blankie with him on his first day of Kindergarten. He thought that as long as Blankie was with him, he could survive this very scary episode in his life. Finally, he agreed to keep Blankie in his backpack while he was at school. Blankie went with him every day until he thought he could handle it by himself.

As you can imagine, many years of that kind of affection and companionship has taken a toll on Blankie. It is now ragged, worn and threadbare. Its soft white flannel has turned a dingy gray that no amount of washing can brighten. The proud blue satin has mostly disintegrated. At some point my son asked me to sew more satin on. I really tried, but the flannel was so worn that it didn't hold the stitches. The little embroidered bear is now faded and sad.

My son knew it was time to let Blankie go, but he didn't have the heart to simply throw his old friend in the trash. He came to me with his dilemma.

I told him about a certain pillowcase that was my "blankie" when I was growing up. I told him I had found a beautiful box, folded up my ragged pillowcase, and placed my precious friend in it. I still have it somewhere.

My son thought that was a good idea and asked if I would buy him a box. That's how I found myself going from store to store trying to find the perfect box for Blankie. It had to be sturdy since it would be Blankie's forever home. It couldn't be girly, because Blankie was apparently a boy. And it had to be worthy of a life-long friend.

I finally found a box that I thought my son would approve of. It was covered in blue satin, reminiscent of the

color of Blankie's trim long ago. The top had a dignified silver bow.

When I presented my son with the box, he declared it perfect, much to my relief. He gently folded Blankie and placed it in the box with a few other childhood treasures. He slowly closed the box and placed it on a high shelf in view of his bed.

Blankie was thus honored and my little boy had become a young man.

You can reach Laura by e-mail or visit her web site at [www.lauraonlife.com](http://www.lauraonlife.com)

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