

Megan's Father Falls III



A Spirit Guide, A Ghost Tiger, and One Scary Mother!

by Owen Jones

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by

OWEN JONES

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1 MEGAN'S FATHER FEELS FUNNY

Megan usually arrived home from school an hour and a half before her father got in from work, and it had been her habit for as long as she could remember to run downstairs to meet him at the front door. This day was no different in that regard, but she stopped at the foot of the stairs and watched him take his jacket off.

He had the look of someone who had just run his first marathon without ever doing any training for it. He looked as if he were worn out and in great pain.

“Whatever is the matter, Daddy?”

“Hello, darling? How are you? I’m fine. Just a little tired, that’s all.”

She went to him and kissed him on the cheek as she always did.

“You look pale too, Daddy. Come in and sit down. Have a cup of tea. It might make you feel better.”

“I’m sure it will. Lead on, Mc Duff!”

She took his hand and led him up the narrow passageway to the living room door and opened it.

“Mam! Dad’s home and he’s looking worn out. Is there tea in the pot or shall I put some fresh?”

“Away with you, girl! You know I always make a fresh pot of tea for six when your father’s due! Go and pour us all a cup.”

“What’s the matter, love? Still not feeling quite right?”

“No. I can’t say that I feel any worse than yesterday, but I can’t say I feel any better either. It’s odd. I can feel fine for a few hours and then it’s just as if someone has thrown a switch or my batteries have run down, and I feel worn out. Perhaps, I’m coming down with the flu, or maybe it’s the change in the weather. It is a lot warmer and the summer will be here soon. That’s probably it... a lot of people suffer from the changes of the seasons, don’t they?”

“Yes, they say that they do, but you never have before.”

“No, that’s true... Maybe it’s because I’m getting old.”

“Perhaps, I’ll see if I can get you some sort of tonic tomorrow.”

Megan brought a tray in with tea and biscuits.

“There’s some cake in the tin, Megan, I baked it this morning.”

“Shall I bring it all in, or just three slices, Mam?”

“Do it properly. Put it on a doily on a cake dish and bring three tea plates and a cake slice.”

“Yes, Mam.”

“Are you really feeling as bad as you look, dear?”

“I look that bad, do I? I ache all over, I feel dog-tired and I’ve got a headache. It’s like the flu, but worse.”

“You men and your man flu, really! You all pretend to be big, brave and macho, but you allow a simple cold to floor you. Most women go through worse than the flu every month of their adult lives.”

“Yes, well there you are then... You get used to it, but we only get sick once every year or two and our bodies forget how to handle it. We feel it more.”

Robert wasn’t sure whether he was talking sense but it sounded good enough to him at the time.

“Is this how you mean, Mam?”

“Yes, dear. That’s the way to do it. I want you to get used to doing things properly for when we have visitors.”

“But we never get any visitors, Mam! You say that the house is too small to receive visitors.”

“And so it is, but we may not be living here for ever. People have been known to move... We may move too, ... one day. Perhaps, we’ll have a nice semi in the suburbs with a front and a back garden.”

She looked at her husband who managed a faint smile. He’d heard it all a hundred times before, but she was allowed her dreams.

Everyone was.

“Do you mind if I skip dinner tonight, love. I think I’ll eat my cake and drink my cup of tea to keep my strength up, but all I really want is a couple of paracetamols and a sleep. I’ll see how I feel then, but I’ll probably just sleep on through till tomorrow.”

“No, that’s all right, my dear. If you’re not up to it you are better off in bed. It’s cauliflower cheese tonight, so I’ll put some up for you and if you fancy it later, I can microwave it for you, otherwise I’ll freeze it for another day.

“What time do you want yours, Megan?”

“The usual time, Mam, seven to seven thirty, whatever suits you best.”

“OK, early and I’ll have an early night as well, so I can take care of your father.”

At breakfast the next day, Robert looked a lot better and everyone hoped that he was over the worst of his bout of the flu. He ate a hearty breakfast of sausage, bacon, eggs, tomatoes, mushrooms and cauliflower cheese and thoroughly enjoyed it, as did everyone else.

Megan studied her father over the breakfast table, but she wasn't convinced that he was yet fully recovered. She thought that he certainly looked better, but she noticed that his eye sockets were darker than normal and that his eyes looked dull.

It struck her that he looked like a toy, the batteries of which had had a flash charge rather than the full overnight job. Still, she went to school and he went to work, leaving Suzanne at home alone to continue her endless and thankless task of cooking and cleaning. As Suzanne saw it, it was what she was supposed to be doing to keep her family running as it should be. It was what her mother and every other woman in her family had done. Forever.

At three p.m. Megan received a call on her mobile phone while she was in a class. She apologised to the teacher, but explained that it was from her mother, so she had to take it. The teacher told her to stand in the corridor so as not to disrupt her class.

"Megan, your father has just rung. He's ill in work, so I'm going in to drive him and the car home. We may not be there when you get back, so check to see that you've got your key on you."

"OK... yes, I've got it right here."

"Are you sure? I can leave one with Mrs. Horrobin or Mrs. James next door next door, if you haven't got yours."

"I have mine right here, Mam. Please stop fussing."

"All right. I'll see you later. I'm so worried about your father. He's never been taken ill like this before..."

"OK, Mam, try to stay calm. You'd better get off. I'll see you both at home later. I'm sure Dad will be all right once you get him home."

"Yes, all right, Megan, dear. See you later."

Megan knocked the door and went back into the classroom.

"Is everything all right, Megan?" asked the teacher.

"We're not sure, Miss. My father has been taken ill at work, so my mother has gone in to pick him up. He looked pretty bad last night, but he

says that it's probably only the flu."

"Well, let's hope that he's right. Now to continue our lesson on the history of human migration out of Africa..."

When Megan got home, her parents had already returned. Her mother was making tea and reading the instructions on the label of some tonic she had bought that morning and her father was lying on the couch in his pyjamas with a blanket over him. He was looking rather sorry for himself and staring blankly at the TV, which was showing an old film, but judging by the expression on his face, she doubted that much of it was sinking in.

Megan looked at her father's Aura, but the only difference to normal was a complete lack of energy. It was as he had said, he was completely exhausted. The thought crossed her mind that he was not ill at all, just very, very tired, but she stopped the thought. She knew that she was just too inexperienced to make that sort of judgement.

"Is there anything I can get you, Dad?"

"No, thank you, my dear. I'll probably sleep after I've taken whatever witch's brew your mother is making up for me. It's sure to taste disgusting and not help one little bit, but at least she's trying, I suppose."

Suzanne ascended the few steps from the kitchen into the living room.

"Here you are, love, valerian and blackcurrant tea. The herbalist said that the valerian would help you sleep and the Vitamin C in the blackcurrant would give your body strength. She said that it counteracted the bitterness of the valerian as well, so that it tastes quite nice. Go on, try it, Robert."

He put it to his lips.

"It's like drinking boiling water! Without milk to cool it down, I suppose that that's just what it is. It smells lovely though. I'll give it a few minutes to cool down. Thanks, my dear."

"Megan, get your father a glass of cold water, please."

When she returned, Suzanne poured some of it into the cup of herbal tea.

"Try it now. Is that better?"

"Yes, much. It really is quite nice." He winked at Megan, who smiled back. "Yes, I could get used to that. What are these on the plate?"

"Brewers' Yeast for energy metabolism and multivitamins as a general tonic."

"I see, thanks. They can't hurt. I think that Brewers' yeast was in Philosan, wasn't it? *Philosan fortifies the over forties!*"

“Yes, I think it was. Go on get them down you and wash them down with the rest of the water.”

“OK, nurse!” He smiled at Megan again who smiled back at both of them to keep the peace.

“Are you warm, Robert?”

“No, I’m about right. It’s just that all my joints ache and I feel so tired.”

“Would you like to go to bed?”

“No, not really. It’s only five o’clock, but I will snooze here and go to bed early again. Perhaps after dinner. Megan, could you find me a decent film to watch, please? I’m not sure that I’ll be able to follow it, but anything is better than this rubbish.”

“OK, Dad.” She flicked through the channels, but it was too early, so she went to Sky Movies. “There are three old free ones on there, Daddy, or you can pay to watch something new.”

“No, I don’t want to pay. I may fall asleep, if your mothers tea works and the yeast and multivitamins don’t. In fact, I’ll probably fall asleep halfway through it anyway.”

“Well, here’s the remote, Dad.”

He lay down flatter as if getting ready to go to sleep. Megan sat on the pouffe near her father’s head and stroked his hands which were resting on his chest. He opened his eyes for a few seconds, smiled, said, “That’s nice,” and fell asleep. Megan watched his Aura as he did so. It was the first time that she had witnessed the phenomenon, so again, she felt unqualified to draw any conclusions from what she saw, but nothing looked ‘wrong’. He still looked quite normal, just very, very tired.

When he was asleep, Megan went into the kitchen to help her mother and have a chat.

“What do you think it is, Mam?”

“I don’t know, love. Maybe he’s only coming down with the flu, or maybe he’s worried about something at work. He hasn’t said anything to me though. However, I have noticed how tired he’s been getting lately. I don’t think it’s anything serious though – he hasn’t got a temperature and he’s not in pain, so try not to worry about him too much. If he’s no better tomorrow, we’ll keep him home from work and either take him to the doctor’s or try to get the doctor to come here.

“Right, then, Megan, go upstairs and start your homework, there’s nothing you can do here. I’m finished in the kitchen for a while, so I’ll go

and sit with your father and watch television and we'll send him to bed early."

Megan went up to her room with a heavy heart and did not make the clatter she usually did for fear of waking her father. She sat on the bed close to tears and stroked her familiar, Grrr, the Siberian tiger.

"It is so worrying, Grrr, I can't ever remember seeing my father ill before. I didn't think that parents got ill. I mean, I suppose they must do, but I'd never thought about it before.

"Dad asked me about healing once – whether I could heal - and I said that I didn't know. I wish now that I'd taken the trouble to find out. Maybe I could be helping him right now. What would you do, if one of your cubs were ill, Grrr? I bet you were a great mother."

Grrr licked Megan's hands and then lay a huge paw over them.

"Yes! I suppose you would lick the cub, but I can't lick my Dad, can I? I suppose we humans kiss, not lick. So, I could kiss him better, wish him a speedy recovery and hold his hand?

"Thanks, girl, I'll remember that."

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