

TEDDY RUXPIN

written by

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inspired by
the classic children's toy
Teddy Ruxpin

Zac Efron is



Teddy Ruxpin



“What Teddy knows from books is about to be tested in the real world.”



Teddy Ruxpin, a talking teddy bear, discovers he can become human after he is discarded by his owner and sent to a second-hand store. But what he doesn't know is that the world isn't an easy place for a teddy bear to fit into. Overweight, out of shape, broke and hungry, Teddy must venture on his own using only the stories he knows, if he is to find out who he really is. But the one who needs him most, the little girl he lost, is the only one who can grant him the happiness he gives to others.



Trapped in a second-hand store by day, Teddy and his stuffed buddies make adventures into the night to learn about the real world and the right to be human.

SUPERIMPOSE: "MANHATTAN, 2002"

EXT. MIDTOWN - ONE WAY STREET - DAY

A red coupe drives erratically in and out of traffic, swerving to miss a bicycle, then a lady with groceries --

BUILDING ENTRANCE

until it crash-parks at a curb next to a long carpet runner.

INT. PASSENGER VEHICLE - DAY

A little girl, TESSA CANDY (7), sits beside her grandmother, VANA (61), in front of the building.

Her grandmother pulls a tin with a bow out of the back seat and stuffs it into her backpack --

VANA

If you believe in magic only one
time every year, it has to be on
your birthday --

Tessa fogs up the window and draws a heart on it.

VANA (CONT'D)

Because that's the day when a wish
came true, even if you didn't make
it yourself.

Tessa moves her hands so her grandma can unbuckle her.

VANA (CONT'D)

Nobody knows why, or how any of
this happened. But the thing we do
know is that if you love somebody
enough they will always know that
you loved them.

Vana taps Tessa on the nose.

VANA (CONT'D)

And that's why you're here.

Tessa blinks, and plants one on grandma's cheek --

VANA (CONT'D)

I'll call you tomorrow.

Tessa gets out of the vintage Alfa Romeo --

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - SIDEWALK - DAY

-- carrying her teddy bear, but is reluctant to walk to the front door of her building alone.

Vana rolls down the window --

VANA (CONT'D)
Ask Teddy to fly you there.

Tessa whispers something into Teddy's ear.

The doorman of the building holds the door open as he watches from under the awning.

The little girl looks at her grandmother, and then at the doorman, hugs her teddy bear, then looks up to the sky --

DISSOLVE TO:

ANIMATION

Tessa is flying with the bear, a Teddy Ruxpin (personalized by her grandmother's sewing, with a scarf, and goggles).

Through the air and into the clouds, Tessa and Teddy travel across a big, blue, fluffy sky in a double-wing single-prop flyer.

OPENING TITLE SEQUENCE (OVER ANIMATION)

END TITLES AND ANIMATION

CUT TO:

INT. CANDY APARTMENT - TESSA'S ROOM - DAY

Tessa is playing with her teddy bear at a miniature-sized table with full tea service.

There are two chairs opposite each other, and Tessa is making pretend tea, but she describes everything perfectly --

TESSA
(carrying tray)
I made you lavender tea from my garden. I hope you like it. There was a lot of sunshine in the meadow today.

Teddy just sits there staring blankly.

Tessa opens the present her grandmother gave her. It is a tin of honey drop cookies.

She places one on Teddy's plate and one on hers.

TESSA (CONT'D)

Because it's my birthday we get to
have one cookie. One for you, and
one for me.

Teddy is a classic animatronic story bear that has been
updated by grandma Vana, with new electronic components for
the digital age, to match his personalized scarf and goggles.

But Teddy is motionless.

TESSA (CONT'D)

Ooops! I forgot you were sleeping.

Tessa turns on Teddy's power switch.

LIVE ACTION/ANIMATION HYBRID

Teddy now becomes a CGI character based on Tessa's
imagination (but he still looks like the live action version
of Teddy we just saw in the chair).

Teddy is a little rambunctious, irreverent and willful.

TEDDY

(uppity accent)

Yucck! I hate honey. It's entirely
possible that you didn't know that.
Nevertheless, just because I'm a
bear doesn't mean you should assume
I like honey.

(trying to wiggle out of
his chair)

You didn't even ask me if I wanted
a cookie. Then I could have
politely refused --

TESSA

Calm down Teddy! You can eat it
later when I'm not looking.

TEDDY

(walking toward bookcase)

Was I not perfectly clear?

TESSA

I want you to tell me the story
about the elephant.

TEDDY

(climbing onto window
ledge)

(MORE)

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Elephants are rude, ghastly
creatures, grasping at everything
with their trunks. I once knew an
elephant, his ears were so big,
when he sneezed people thought an
airplane was landing.

Teddy's biplane (the one from the animation) is parked on the
window ledge.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Why do you need an elephant if you
can have your very own airplane?
(looking out window at
Manhattan)
I can take you anywhere you want to
go.

Tessa gives him a pouty look.

TESSA
But it's my birthday. If you don't
tell me who will?

TEDDY
(climbing onto window
seat)
Don't look at me that way? It's a
dumb story if it has an elephant in
it. *End of story.*

There's traffic below on the street. Teddy assesses the view.
From the 16th story, the city lights sparkle like an endless
stretch of runway.

TESSA
Please...? I'm going to put on my
story slippers, and when I come
back I hope you will have changed
your mind.

Tessa walks into her giant closet to change her Mary-Janes
for something more comfortable.

TESSA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(warning)
Or it's bedtime for you!

TEDDY
(projecting across the
room)
We've already discussed this. You
and I are leaving. I'm going to
pack your bag right now.
(MORE)

TEDDY (CONT'D)
 (emptying Tessa's backpack
 on the floor)
 It's time we make our own story.
 (abandoning the backpack)
 Otherwise, it's the same thing,
 everyday --

Teddy jumps down to the bookshelf.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
 (to himself; browsing)
 Not a good story on any of these
 shelves...

TESSA'S CLOSET

Tessa finds one slipper (a fluffy "story slipper" with the penny hole for a book sticker) -- then hunts for the other.

She takes one sticker of an elephant (from a sticker board on the wall labelled "Kazooka: Story Puzzle"), and tucks it into the tongue of her shoe.

FRONT OF BOOKCASE

Teddy extracts a book: "Don't Make the Elephant Sneeze," (children's story credit, Giancarlo Candy).

TEDDY (CONT'D)
 (turning pages)
 How come it has no pictures...?
 (turning pages)
 And I don't see any words either...

CONSTANCE (30), Tessa's mom, enters the room. Teddy goes limp, pretending to be asleep. The book drops to the floor --

CONSTANCE
Tessa? What's your bear doing on
 the floor. And pick up your things.

TESSA'S CLOSET

Tessa stands on her tippy toes, behind her birthday dress, squinting one eye -- hoping her mother won't see her.

MATCH CUT

INSERT - BOOK COVER (illustration): "A little girl, hanging a star, into the night sky, while standing on a tuffet, in a dressing room, at a circus."

CONSTANCE places the book back on the shelf.

She observes the bear -- turning her head this way and that way. He has a strange look on his face.

TESSA'S CLOSET (external view)

She picks him up -- peeks into the closet, then walks out with him --

DOWN THE HALLWAY - the PHONE begins RINGING...

INT. ART ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The PHONE RINGING continues -- Constance doesn't pick up.

She is holding Teddy out at arms length, rotating him a bit -- framing Teddy over her blank canvas -- visualizing a pose.

She sets Teddy down by her easel and palette --

Constance makes some loose sketch marks on the canvas -- then leaves the room.

Teddy comes to life again --

TEDDY
(looking at the sketch)
I don't like the way this looks.

From the counter, Teddy assesses the height is beyond jumping range.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
(muttering)
First I'm cornered into reading a completely unremarkable story. And now, as far as I can tell, I've been kidnapped -- taken from my dear friend Tessa --
(calling out the door)
Tessa! Why don't you bring your book in here...

CUT TO:

INT. CANDY APARTMENT - TESSA'S ROOM

Tessa puts on her second slipper -- walks out of her closet -- and looks around for Teddy -- under her bed --

CUT TO:

INT. CANDY APARTMENT - GIANNI'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Giancarlo (Gianni, 44) has his back turned to the door, broad with a lot of girth and suspenders. He is on the phone.

Constance stands at the door, seductively, observing. She is frail and feminine.

CONSTANCE
Gianni, please, get off the phone
and come sit with me...

Giancarlo, Tessa's dad, is COOING to someone.

GIANCARLO
Mhmmmm, ...yeahhhh...!
(sotto)
I do like icecream.

CONSTANCE
Gianni, *I'm calling you!*

Giancarlo turns around --

HIS FACE - It is the same expression the teddy bear had:
"vacant, shameful, naked of words."

Gianni HANGS UP erratically, without saying goodbye.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
Are you coming? My show is on...
(softening)
I need your arm, baby. I can't
watch TV without you.

Gianni looks upset. His nostrils are now flaring.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY/LIVING ROOM (TRAVELING) - CONTINUOUS

GIANCARLO
Constance, it's a game show, for
Christ's sake. Isn't this childish
for you already?

CONSTANCE
No. They are making singers, on TV.
Isn't that interesting for you?

GIANCARLO
(conceding)
I'm going to make a drink.

CONSTANCE

Already?

GIANCARLO

Constance, please let me do what I want to do.

Gianni is 250 pounds of dark, Italian flesh, with a midsection like a pear. He pours himself a hard drink, then glares at Constance briefly from behind the bar.

Constance curls up on the couch, leaving a spot for him. He changes his mind and walks off --

CONSTANCE

Well, give me a pillow at least, if you're gonna walk away. That's the least you could provide your wife, *some comfort!*

Gianni throws Constance a heart-shaped pillow. Constance turns on her show, "American Idol."

CUT TO:

INT. GIANNI'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Gianni lurks into his study and dials another 800 number.

The croon of "American Idol" is audible down the hall.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tessa walks in.

ON TV

"AMERICAN IDOL" (2002, FOX NETWORK): Kelly Clarkson is ending a song. Simon Cowell delivers his trademark mean guy bit.

TESSA

(almost in tears)

Mommy. Have you seen Teddy?

CONSTANCE

(turned towards TV)

Can you wait for a commercial, honey?

TESSA
But, mommy. Teddy is missing.
(crying now)
I can't find him.

TESSA'S CRY becomes audible over the TV.

Constance reacts --

CONSTANCE
Oh, no, no, no! I'm sorry. Come
here. What happened?

TESSA
(facing her mother)
I was looking for Teddy.
(sobbing)
I can't find him.

Constance grabs Tessa and holds her.

CONSTANCE
I know where he is. Let's see if we
can find him. He was being a
naughty boy.
(walking out of room)
Should we go find him?

INT. ART ROOM (THRESHOLD) - CONTINUOUS

CONSTANCE
See..? He's going to have his
picture taken. Mommy's going to
paint him for your birthday party
tomorrow. *OK?*

TESSA
But he was going to tell me a
story.

INT. HALLWAY (TRAVELLING) - CONTINUOUS

CONSTANCE
Maybe daddy will tell us both a
story. Let's go ask him.

INT. GIANNI'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Constance walks in with Tessa in her arms.

Gianni is on the phone, again.

CONSTANCE
(escalating)
This has to stop. Whatever it is.

Constance grabs the phone line -- yanks the cable from the jack -- then pulls Tessa close to her chest.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
(eyeing him sternly)
Daddy is going to read a story for us --

Gianni looks like he is about to explode.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
-- and then we'll talk about your special birthday dinner...

Constance edges up to Gianni, like a lioness.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
Grab Daddy's hand.

Gianni averts the sheer courage of Constance's negligee -- his mood altered by the innocence of a little girl.

GIANNI
It's your birthday tomorrow. You ready for your big party?

Constance pushes Tessa into Gianni's arms. Gianni smirks at Constance.

TESSA
Will you read me the story about the elephant?

GIANNI
What kind of elephant? Did grandma buy you a new book?

Gianni leaves the room with Tessa.

Constance is transfixed by the unplugged phone.

INT. TESSA'S ROOM

Gianni picks a book from the shelf.

GIANCARLO
This one's great. It's about a bunch of animals that decide to take control over a zoo...

TESSA

Is it the one about the elephant?

GIANCARLO

I don't remember the one about the elephant.

TESSA

It's about an elephant that gets born...

(excited)

and then the elephant sneezes.

GIANCARLO

He sneezes? It's supposed to be funny?

TESSA

Yep.

Gianni and Tessa settle into Tessa's bed.

GIANCARLO

So it's like an adventure. But is it an important adventure?

(pulling Tessa into his center)

We should look into it. I bet that if we go to this zoo, in here...

(gesturing to book)

we will find out a clue about your elephant.

The PHONE RINGS, in the other room --

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Constance picks up the cordless, and wanders down the hall.

HALLWAY (TRAVELLING)

Holding the phone to her ear -- looking through

THE DOORWAY

VANA (V.O.)

What's Tessa doing...?

CONSTANCE

Her father's reading to her...

Constance peeks into the room. Gianni and Tessa are spooned into a banana split on Tessa's bed -- then

HALLWAY

she continues to

INT. ART ROOM - CONTINUOUS

VANA (V.O.)
You gonna pick up the cake
tomorrow?

CONSTANCE
(changing the subject)
Where did you take her?

VANA (V.O.)
The zoo. *Why..?*

She adjusts Teddy's position on the counter -- revealing his face --

CONSTANCE
Because she dumped her backpack.
And then she was asking about an
elephant.

Teddy's expression changes from shock to guilt.

VANA (V.O.)
Maybe she lost something?

CONSTANCE
Apparently she lost an elephant.

Behind Constance are a set of unfinished paintings on the wall. They are each psychological depictions of animals connected to the heavenly spheres -- painted in the supernatural style of Henry Fuseli, a neoclassicist and influencer of William Blake -- at various stages of completion.

VANA (V.O.)
I'll bring something for her.

CONSTANCE
I'll pick up the cake tomorrow --

Constance peels off Teddy's scarf, exposing his "ON" button --

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
Alright, ma'. I'll see ya'
 tomorrow.

then makes some loose sketch marks on the canvas.

CUT TO:

INT. TESSA'S ROOM

Constance stands at the door -- hanging Teddy to her side with one hand, like an accessory.

She is the picture of seduction: a woman and a girl at the same time -- staring into the room at a vision only a young mother could behold.

Gianni ignores her.

CONSTANCE'S POV - SLOW PUSH ACROSS Tessa's menagerie of toys, dolls, and books towards the miracle of a father-daughter moment. Constance eyes a spot between Gianni and Tessa to crawl into --

and places her knee into the empty nook on the bed.

GIANNI'S POV - Gianni inches forward, closing the space between he and Tessa -- eclipsing Constance at her knee.

Gianni continues narrating the story --

GIANCARLO
 Kazook, had ears that drooped over
 his forehead...

A sparky Tessa listens to her dad.

Constance tries, again, to nestle into another nook, at the foot of the bed, aiming her leg to pry a space apart between Gianni and Tessa.

Gianni crosses his leg -- pretzel-blocking Constance.

Constance, deflected, circles to the other side of the bed -- facing Gianni's massive rear, and a sliver of unoccupied bed.

GIANCARLO (CONT'D)
 Kazook had been sleeping for almost
 100 years. And was listening to the
 dream he was having...

Constance tries to plank herself onto the edge of the bed -- only to fall off, losing grip of Teddy --

collapsing onto her side.

Gianni ignores the THUD behind him.

Constance resigns herself to an auditory only experience -- turning her face to the ceiling. She tucks Teddy under her head for support, and bumps the soft spot on her skull with the hidden control module.

Constance, angered --

CONSTANCE
(expressing pain)
UGHHHH!

plucks Teddy from under her -- rubbing the thump on the back of her head -- then

an aerial toss -- making an arc across the bed --

GIANCARLO
In the dream, new animals were
being formed. And ALL OF CREATION
came from that dream.

Neither Tessa nor Gianni notice Teddy's accidental flight -- until there is a THUD as the bear hits the WALL. Gianni glaces --

GIANCARLO (CONT'D)
Kazook was the zookeeper...

Teddy lands upside down, facing the carpet.

Tessa's eyes grow weary and flutter -- her hand crossed over her body, touching her father's heartbeat as he speaks.

Gianni TURNS THE PAGE one more time --

GIANCARLO (CONT'D)
... although his greatest work
happened while he was sleeping.

Constance lifts her head -- pulling herself up over the ridge of Gianni's massive horizontal carcass -- to view the father-daughter interaction.

Gianni senses Tessa is fading.

GIANCARLO (CONT'D)
Because the animals were beginning
to disappear, Azu was concerned
that she should not wake him --

Gianni cups his hand over Tessa's eyes to see if she has fallen into sleep.

Tessa doesn't flinch. Gianni starts to pry himself away.

GIANCARLO (CONT'D)
-- before the new creation was finished.

CONSTANCE
(reading the next line)
But she could see no tomorrow --
only that everything would be ending.

Gianni closes the book.

Tessa opens her eyes at her mother's voice --

Gianni wiggles out of horizontal repose -- towering above Tessa and Constance.

Constance assumes his position.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
(in Azu's character voice)
"Kah-zuu-ke-nah! Kah-zuu-ke-nah!"
she called in her song. "A-zhu-wa-le-hu! A-zhu-wa-le-hu!" She laid her head on his forehead so he could feel her presence --

Gianni trips on the pile of things spilled from Tessa's backpack -- crushing the bear with his footprint --

GIANCARLO
Goddammit, Constance! The least you could do is clean up this goddamn mess!

Teddy lies sandwiched into the floor, as Gianni leaves the room, the bear's talking module is activated --

TEDDY
(muffled by the carpet)
Hi. I'm Teddy Ruxpin. Would you like to hear a story?

Tessa lifts her head.

TESSA
Where's daddy going?

CONSTANCE
He's very sneaky, nobody really
knows.

Constance kisses Tessa.

She picks up the mumbling bear, turns "OFF" the power switch -
- then the overhead light.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
Night princess.