The Blankey

by John

All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.

All was confusion in the Lubrecht house. Baby Lubrecht had discovered that his favorite blankey, thought by him to have been lost, was in fact being used by his older sister, Lilly Lubrecht. He had announced, through a series of long, plaintive howls, that he could not live in the same house as a blanket stealer. This situation had continued for three days now and was painfully felt by the entire household, not least by Baby Lubrecht himself, who was incapable of directly expressing the source of his woe. He felt there was no sense in his living together with his inexcusable thief of a sister and that people who meet accidentally at any daycare have more connection with each other than they. Lilly Lubrecht—beleaguered by the non-stop wailing of her new baby brother and seriously considering the old pillow to the face routine—would not leave her room, and could only shove the blanket, which she had discovered in a basket in the laundry room, farther into her ears. Baby Lubrecht, whether in his mother's arms, in his crib, or about the neighborhood in his stroller, looked frantically around as if lost. The Honduran maid, on her weekly visit, quarreled with Mother Lubrecht and wrote a note to a friend, asking her to find her a new place.

On the third day of the quarrel, Baby Lubrecht—Bobby as he was called in public—although having cried hard and long enough to exhaust himself into several hours of sleep, woke up hours earlier than usual, that is, at five o'clock in the morning, not in his crib but in his parent's bed, on their Egyptian cotton sheets. He rolled his full, fatty body over, as if wishing to fall asleep again for a long time, tightly hugged his teddy bear from the other side and pressed his cheek to it; but suddenly, at the realization of his still-missing blankey, he gave a start, balled up his little fists and set again to his sorrowful wailing.

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Shortly after, Lilly Lubrecht entered the bedroom, woken yet again by the little ball of fat and tears that had so abruptly entered her life, that had swollen and then released itself from her mother. With her she dragged the object of so much consternation, the blankey. Baby Lubrecht, upon sighting the blankey—itself small and blue with a smattering of yellow brontosaurs—unballed his little fists and reached out toward it, having wanted few things more—his mother's milk perhaps the only thing that had so driven his desires. And Lilly Lubrecht, sensing, maybe as only siblings can, her baby brother's wishes, raised the blankey up to his tear-streaked face. Baby Lubrecht's eyes grew wide and his toothless mouth froze in gummy anticipation. And then, in a moment of kindness Baby Lubrecht would always remember deep within, his sister handed him the blankey.

And once again calm befell the Lubrecht house, which was good, as their Aunt Anna was due for a visit any day, and she always brought along a mess of her own troubles.