

## Sleepy Papa, by Paul Arinaga

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Papa was always sleepy.

When he read stories to Jen and James he would soon doze off.

They would jump all over him like little bear cubs and cheerfully scream: "Daddy, wake up! Read the story!"

Sometimes he read them stories standing up. One time he even fell asleep while standing up. He didn't fall down.

Every morning mama would get up to make breakfast and dress the children.

"Dear...wake up!" she would say, gently shaking papa's shoulder.

A few minutes later she would shout from down in the kitchen: "Honey, it's time to get up!" She was like a human snooze button.

Finally, mama would go up stairs, give papa a big kiss and say: "Darling, it's time to get up." Papa would spring out of bed ready for action.

Papa was a deep sleeper, but once he woke up he was full of energy. He rode his bicycle to the office, rain or shine. He loved his job...and joking around with his friends at work. Sometimes, though, in the afternoon he dozed off at his desk.

When papa wasn't sleeping he was very active. He loved climbing mountains, both big and small, and playing games with Jen and James. On weekends, mama and he spent time on their little sailboat.

But one morning papa didn't wake up.

"Darling, wake up," mama said, gently shaking him.

Mama got scared. But mama was a doctor so she knew what to do. She listened for his heartbeat.

"Dunkun...dunkun...dunkun"

She had trouble hearing it because papa started to snore.

“Silly goose, wake up” said mama.

Jen and James tried jumping all over papa, and bouncing all over mama’s and papa’s bed, but still he didn’t wake up.

A big red ambulance came, and some men in funny coats took papa away on a rolling bed.

Papa came home from the hospital, the very next day. The doctors couldn’t find anything wrong with him.

“Well, maybe he’s just tired” said old Mr. Patchett from next door.

Mama laid him back in his bed.

That night Jen and James played a special concert for papa: recorder, Australian didgeridoo horn and African drums. They screamed in their loudest voices. The neighbors called the police.

A policeman knocked at the door. He came inside to look at papa. They carried papa outside and the policeman tried blaring his siren and flashing his lights. But papa still didn’t wake up.

The next morning, mama gave papa a cold bath. He sneezed, “ker-choo!” but he didn’t wake up.

When mama came home from work, papa was still asleep and snoring peacefully.

She put papa in her car and drove him to a construction site. Jackhammers were rattling: “ka-ta-ka-ta-ka-ta”. Every few minutes a pile driver slammed down: “kaaaa-chuunk”. Papa snored on.

That evening, Jen and James had a slumber party. They and their friends pretended that papa was Sleeping Beauty. But he didn’t wake up when they kissed him.

Pretty soon, everyone in Jen’s and James’ school had heard about their sleepy father. And as the weeks went by, pretty soon everyone in the whole town knew about “sleepy papa”.

Some people thought that papa was lazy. Others thought he was sick. They offered to help.

A rock band from the school gave a concert on sleepy papa's front lawn. Papa snored on.

An Indian yogi had papa doing headstands in his sleep. Papa slumbered on.

One day, Jen and James came home from school and there were reporters outside their house. Cameras whirred and flashed. Some very excited people thrust microphones in front of them and asked them how their dad was doing.

"Well, he's still asleep," they said.

"And how do you feel about it?" asked the reporters. "Well, I wish he would wake up so he could play with us and read us stories," they said.

The next morning, a man called from the National Institute of Health. He wanted to know if papa would be a research subject in their study of people with sleeping problems. Mama agreed. She hoped they could figure out why papa wouldn't wake up.

The doctors couldn't find anything wrong with papa.

A few days after papa came back, mama got a call from one of papa's best friends. Could papa help raise money for children's outdoor camps by joining an expedition, he wanted to know. Mama wasn't sure at first, but she knew that papa loved children and mountains so finally she agreed.

Papa became the first man to "climb" Mount Everest...in his sleep.

Soon after that, mama got a call from a TV producer. Mama and papa appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show. It was the first time a guest had appeared in his sleep.

By then "sleepy papa" and his wife had raised two million, five hundred fifty-five thousand, two-hundred sixty-nine dollars and twenty-nine cents so children could learn about mountains and have fun in the great outdoors.

Sleepy papa had appeared on seven TV shows, made a TV commercial, been interviewed by thirty-nine journalists and climbed Mount Everest (well, been pulled up it). He had been prodded and poked by thirty-seven doctors and other specialists trying to figure out why he wouldn't wake up. Sleepy papa's ears had heard everything from jackhammers and pile

drivers to African drums and hard rock music. He had been shaken, spun around and hung upside down an Indian yogi.

Sleepy papa had been asleep for two hundred days, sixteen hours, twenty-two minutes and thirty-two seconds.

He was laying snugly in his nice, warm bed.

Mama sighed and said: "Oh, darling, I wish you would wake up" as she kissed him like she'd always used to do.

Suddenly papa stopped snoring, his eyes opened. He sprang out of bed and gave mama a big kiss.

"Gosh, I had a great sleep," he said with a big smile on his face.

Soon papa was playing with Jen and James again, and reading stories to them. He still fell asleep sometimes.

But he always woke up. And mama could always wake him up by saying: "Darling, wake up" and giving him a kiss."

And papa climbed Mt. Everest again. He was the first man to do it awake AND in his sleep.