



# THE TRAGIC TALE OF Teddy Woven

Peter Gray





PETER GRAY

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*This book is dedicated to all of my friends and online fans that have been reading my work for years. Thank you for encouraging me to become a self-published author and believing in my work. This one is dedicated to all of you.*



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# Chapter 1

**M**y story begins in a humble lodging, an ancestral home belonging to Theodore Woven. His lodging was situated by the icy coast, placed upon the highest hill for all to see. Grey granite bricks were built from the ground upwards, towering over the sea-line where his simple white boat was but a dot in the distance. Theodore the second - his official title - lived in this housing alone. His only companion was a sleek white cat named, "Luna," whom he had found as a hungry stray many years ago.

The first time I had set eyes on his home was on the twenty-first of April, on a warm balmy day that would ideally make my job easier. I was to take up my supervisor's position and tend to his private gardens for the next week, while her husband was in the hospital. I was informed it would be a relatively easy task if I followed one simple instruction: to leave the master of that house alone.

\* \* \*

Olive coloured rain-boots splashed against the dewy grass, squishing loudly with each step as I strode over the endless field

that led to the tall brick building atop of the hill. An umbrella was squeezed tightly in my hand. It was drizzling outside, but it was not enough to dissuade me from paying this house a visit. I had a map in my left hand, a circle around Mr. Woven's lodging to help me on my way as I wandered around this unfamiliar village.

It was just after dawn, and the sun was shining full strength despite the light water droplets drizzling from the sky. It was unusually warm weather as well, compelling me to unzip my black raincoat to let it swing at my sides. The house was becoming clearer now; a thick array of green vines crept up the side of the brick wall. There were large green hedges streamed beside it, and fern trees half covering the windows. I spotted a small trail of a brick pathway leading up to the house, so I moved over to the left to navigate myself towards that well-trodden path. A vintage bike was parked outside of the front doorway, glossy with a cheery red shine that glistened in the golden sunlight. There was a shed to the left of the house; it was painted with a pale ruddy colour that had faded over the years. I could only assume the supplies I needed would be there, but first I must introduce myself to the owner.

I knocked on the door, and then looked around to see Mr. Woven's property was devoid of all people. His house was somewhat isolated, though the picturesque view of the blue sea made up for it.

A heavy lock sounded from the inner quarters, and then I heard the creaking of a door as it slowly opened. In time I saw a man standing before me; his tall, lean stature easily overwhelmed me as I barely met the top of his chest. He had a proud look to him with dark eyes and a sharp, angular nose. His lips were tightly pursed as he looked down at me. I could

feel a wave of scrutiny from him, and once he was satisfied with his silent examination, the stranger in front of me opened the door a tad bit wider. "Good morning," he drawled in a lifeless voice.

"Good morning," I answered him.

There was a light meow behind the man, prompting him to look over his shoulder to find the cat that was vying for his attention. He took a step back, allowing me to see the small creature with soft blue eyes. The white cat tilted its head, trying to find the right angle to see the whole of my figure. The man abandoned his post and quickly swept the cat off the floor to cradle the creature lovingly. He approached the open doorway with the small white feline in his arms, allowing his right hand to stroke it softly as he reverted his attention to me. "How can I help you?"

"My name is Sela. My supervisor's name is Daphne." I paused to see if this man displayed any recognition to my supervisor's name. "Daphne Risson."

"Yes, I know who she is," he exclaimed with disinterest.

"Her husband is in the hospital right now. She has sent me to tend to your gardens for the week."

"An entire week?"

"Yes, sir."

He nodded his head slowly, though he maintained that resolute dead-pan expression. "Come in," he quipped, before he turned his back to me. I took the liberty of removing my damp coat once I stepped inside. The tall man shut the door behind me, and then let his plush grey slippers tread over the wooden floor as soft as a mouse. He had a certain glide to his walk, an effortless gait that reminded me of a noble aristocrat. He wore a white dress shirt buttoned up all the way but the sleeves were

rolled up to expose his forearms. The cat was brought higher up his chest, allowing the bridge of his nose to stroke across the fur calmly. "Hang your coat up there," he commanded. "There is a rack, you see." He watched me perform this action quietly, and then suggested I lay my muddy boots on a plastic mat next to the door. "Follow me," he instructed, and then led me down the short hallway to take me into an unknown room.

I entered his living room, observing the pristine order he maintained to the highest degree. There was a sleek black piano placed next to the open window. The walls were cluttered over with paintings, images of far-away places that I had never seen before. The soft patter of the cat landing on the floor caught my attention, letting my eyes flicker back to its owner.

"My name is Theodore Woven," he stated. "But you may call me Teddy." He raised up his chin proudly, almost expecting me to laugh at his statement. "I would prefer that to *junior*," he added, before he confidently strode over to his large sofa.

His cat hopped over the wooden bench, and then jumped a little higher to land on the piano. The paws were most concerned to not press down on the keyboard, so the cat moved in a certain way to stay along the wooden edges to not make a sound.

"Your cat is beautiful."

"Luna," he exclaimed. "She has been with me for quite some time." He pointed to the right side of the couch. "Please, take a seat."

I inspected my clothes to make sure they were not dirty, and then I nervously took a seat on the other side of the couch.

Luna leapt to the top of the piano and then tilted her head in a curious way, watching the flickering lights change as the clouds continued to drift past the sun. When I turned my attention to

Mr. Woven he immediately dropped his gaze, not wanting me to discover that he had been watching me all along.

"I trust Daphne gave you proper instructions."

"She did."

"I would have liked her to call me," he deliberated aloud. "Is this very sudden?"

"I am afraid it is." My hands interlaced together nervously. "Her husband had a stroke."

"Oh."

Mr. Woven looked down at his hands, examining the lines creasing his knuckles as he let his thoughts drift away. I took the liberty of studying his bookcase, and then the painting of a French vineyard that was placed behind me.

"Am I to give you the wages then? I do direct deposit with her."

"Daphne will pay me out of pocket," I assured him. "It will make things less awkward."

"You are quite early. Have you had something to eat?"

"I don't have a car, so I had to take an earlier bus. I did not want to be late on my first day."

"I see."

"I normally work on the other side of the village. The south side, to be exact. I design and maintain the garden for business owners. Banks, law offices, dentistry's-"

"-but no *private* homes?"

"No."

"Then this must be unusual for you," he observed. Mr. Woven turned his head away from me, letting his gaze settle to the open window where the drapes lightly fluttered in the warm breeze. His cat was curled up in a ball over the piano, lost in a sweet slumber that I almost envied. "You never answered my question."

Would you like something to eat?"

"I have too much work to do."

"Nonsense!" He pushed himself off the comfy couch and then straightened his back in a prideful way. "I have some muffins. Would that suit you?"

"Yes, it would."

He patiently waited for me to rise from the sofa as well, and then led the way. We entered the hallway once again, allowing me to see the wooden staircase directly ahead of us. The walls were bare along the wall here, though the creamy beige ceiling with an intricate diamond pattern held my interest for a bit. Mr. Woven turned to the left, crossing over the curved archway to take two sets of stairs downwards to enter the large kitchen. There was a window to reveal the backyard, and a circular dining table with two chairs situated around it. His kitchen was incredibly clean; a half empty cup of coffee was placed at the edge of the table with the few remains of a torn sesame seed bagel covered in strawberry jam. He pulled out a chair to suggest I take it, and then turned his back to me to wash his hands under the kitchen sink. I could make out the light scent of zucchini, a curious fragrance coming from his liquid hand soap. I took the designated seat in front of a door, though I was satisfied enough to see that I could simply turn my head to see the garden.

"I bought these muffins from a bakery yesterday." I turned my head to see Mr. Woven lifting a pantry to obtain a set of pastries. "I have blueberry, chocolate and banana and one last carrot muffin."

"I will take the carrot."

"Very well." He pulled it out with a set of tongs. "Coffee or tea?"

“Coffee.”

“You like it with cream or milk?”

“I will have it black.”

He looked over his shoulders at me in disbelief before he returned to setting the muffin down on a designated plate. He strode over to me with eyes intently gazing on my person. The plate was set down in front of me, and then Mr. Woven took a deliberate step back. “Need a few minutes to set up the coffee.”

“Take your time.”

“I think I will have a second cup.” He moved away from the table, intent on starting the coffee machine. It was an old device, much like the rest of the items in his house. I thought Mr. Woven lived in a time-warp; an age forgotten, a time that had passed us long ago. He was the strangest of them all, for he had his dark brown hair brushed neatly to the side and sideburns that gave him a more distinguished look. I could only guess he was in his early thirties, but it was so hard to tell. “All the tools that you will ever need will be in the outside shed. You will have no need to come through the house. I detest any mess...” He looked over his shoulder to maintain a hardened gaze on me. “Of any kind.” He began to wash his hands, even though it wasn’t necessary. The running water droned out his voice a bit as he continued, “If you need me, knock on the front door and I shall come. If I am playing the piano, you may knock on the glass window. I find it harder to hear anything else when I am situated there.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Theo or Teddy will do,” he sharply quipped.

“Why Teddy?”

“It was a nickname I received as a child,” he answered with his back to me. I watched his large hands rung the stripped

blue and white towel tightly. "It sort of stuck." He clutched the towel even tighter as he added: "My mother called me that."

I nodded my head silently, deciding it was best to agree with my employer's demands.

The coffee machine made a screeching sound, signalling it was nearly done. I rested my arms over the table, letting it rest around the curve of the plate as I silently watched the man work hard at drying off the last of the dishes. He had large hands, incredibly strong, and I could not help but notice he had not a single ring on his fingers. I imagined he must be lonely living in this house all alone, but he gave no inclination so far that it disagreed with him.

"Do you want a large cup?"

"Oh, not too much."

"Alright." A pastel blue ceramic cup was raised into the air, and he made sure to wiggle it from side to side to get my attention. "This will do?"

"Yes, thank you."

He walked over to my table and set the mug next to my right hand. "Will you be coming here every day?"

"Yes."

"The same time?"

"I believe so. Why?"

"I will have coffee ready for you next time." The coffee machine beeped at the perfect timing, allowing him to turn around to be attentive to the curious machinery. Luna appeared over the open doorway, stretching her back to the point that it curled upward. Her head was shaken once she was done, and then a tired yawn allowed her jaws to open to the fullest. I took in the sharp white fangs, and then watched as lazy blue eyes turned in my direction with curiosity.



"Did you name her after the moon?"

"I did." Teddy came over to retrieve my mug. "Do you think it suits her?"

"With her white fur it does," I mused aloud. I leaned to the right of the chair with my hand barely hovering over the ground. I waved my fingers for the small creature to come over, suddenly feeling the urge to pet her soft fur.

"I would advise you to wash your hands once you touch her," a deep baritone voice echoed over me. In the corner of my eye I could see Teddy laying the mug down on the table. "We don't know where she winds up to sometimes."

Luna ignored her master, simply scampering over to me to drag the side of her head against my hand. "Does Luna go outside?"

"Oh, yes."

"She doesn't get to any trouble?"

"So far no, but I know she doesn't like to go far. It is hard to find her at night, however, she isn't one to sleep with her owner."

"Oh, that is too bad."

Teddy never replied to my statement. I brought the cat upwards to rest on my lap. Luna purred as I swept my fingers along her back, enjoying the attention I was giving her.

"Sela?" I looked upwards to see him hovering over a chair that was to my left. "Do you have any pets?"

"My flat is too small," I complained. "Maybe when I have a place of my own."

"You don't have a place to yourself?"

"Well, the owner doesn't like pets," I explained. "And a cat would scratch up the furniture and walls, wouldn't they?"

"Unfortunately, yes." A touch of milk was dropped into his

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