

Hello, my name is Pajamas, and I'm not sure how I got here... "here" being a dark box of some sort. One minute I was neatly folded and displayed at the store—front and center, of course, because... have you *seen* me? I'm adorable. The next minute everything went dark.

Whoa.... that light is bright. As I'm lifted out of the box, I see a plaque that says Friends of Foster Children and eight smiling faces. One woman reaches out and walks me further into the colorful office. As I take in my surroundings, there's a sign that says "fostering happy childhoods" and shelves of clothes, shoes, toys, toothbrushes, and diapers.

Over the next few days, I realize that there is a pattern. A staff member comes in, grabs an item, and gives it to a child who sounds like they truly need it. Seeing this makes me think that maybe I am ready to belong to someone who really needs me.

Just then, a staff member comes in and begins filling an emergency bag. When she picks me up and puts me in the bag, my stomach feels sick... not just because whoever is carrying this bag does *not* walk smoothly, but because I'm scared... Can I truly make a child happy?

Just then, the zipper opens. A boy, no older than eight, lifts me out. His hair is a mess.... but when I look into his eyes, I see it: he's even more scared than I am.

That night, as he puts me on, an older woman peeks in and whispers, "Goodnight, Jack." At that Jack's fingers brush my fabric like he's holding onto something safe. My heart breaks as he crawls into bed and I feel a tear fall onto my sleeve. Then another. Jack grabs my sleeve and wipes his cheeks. It is at this moment, I understand. *This* is what I was made for. To comfort children who have been through unimaginable things. To be something warm and soft when the world feels cold. To remind them they are not alone.

Over the next weeks, I watch as Jack becomes more comfortable. I even got to hear his laugh for the first time. It was rusty at first, but nothing ever sounded so beautiful to me. He wears me every night, no matter how many times I'm washed and folded. I do my best to be his shield against whatever leftover fear lingers in his mind.

The thing is, I know I won't be with Jack forever. One day he may move homes, return to family, or be adopted by someone who loves him as much as I do. When that day comes, I'll wait for another child. Another scared heart. Another night full of tears I can help wipe away.

I know I'm just a pair of pajamas but I will always work to give these children warmth, comfort, and a moment of safety in a world that hasn't always been kind to them.