



7 to 10
YEARS

BUILDING BEAUTIFUL INSIDE

THE NIGHT IT WENT BOOM

A Story by Arkedelic



STRETCHZONES

THE NIGHT IT WENT BOOM

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THE NIGHT IT WENT BOOM

Sid was not a scaredy-cat.

He could handle horror movie trailers, thunder at 2 a.m., and even Jane's cooking experiments (which were arguably scarier than either).

But that night?

That night, when the boom came?

Everything changed.

It was loud.

Too loud.

Like a monster had punched the sky right above his building. The windows rattled. The lights flickered. And Sid, halfway through brushing his teeth, froze with his mouth full of foam and terror.

Within five minutes, the family WhatsApp group was exploding with questions.

“What was that sound?”

“Transformer blast?”

“Fireworks? Who does fireworks on a Monday?”

“Is everyone okay?”

Sid didn't type anything.



He just... didn't move.

The next morning, he arrived at school looking like he hadn't slept a wink. Because he hadn't.

"Whoa, you look like a pancake that's been stepped on," Jane said.

"Thanks," Sid muttered, yawning.

Sam frowned. "You okay?"

Sid didn't answer.

But Mario noticed. Mario always noticed.

At lunch, the Squad crowded under their usual tree. Jane had her mango pickle sandwiches. Nik was feeding a squirrel tiny bits of his chips. Mario leaned toward Sid.

"You were scared."



Sid looked away. "No."

"You were."

"Okay, fine. I was. But I'm not now."

Mario raised an eyebrow. "Then why did you just flinch when the school bell rang?"

"Maybe I'm just... jumpy."

"Maybe you're not okay and don't want to say it."

Sid bit his lip.

Then he blurted, "What if it happens again?"

"What?"

"The boom. The lights. The noise. What if something explodes and my parents don't even hear me calling? I tried shouting last night and nobody came.

I felt like I was invisible. Or stuck. Or—”

He stopped.

The squirrel paused mid-chip-crunch.

Jane’s mouth stopped mid-bite.

Even Nik stopped making explosion sound effects.

Sam put down her water bottle. “Come to my place tonight.”

Sid blinked. “What?”

“Come over. All of you. Squad sleepover. Pizza, movies, and a whole lot of not boom.”

That evening, they all gathered in Sam’s room. Her house was the most Squad-friendly: big cushions, bigger snacks, and parents who understood the concept of “not asking too many questions.”

Sid had brought his sleeping bag and a little flashlight, just in case.

Jane had brought ghost stories. “For fun!” she said.

Nik had brought a full torch set, two sets of earplugs, and a Nerf gun.

Mario? Mario brought a notebook. No one asked why.

At 10:21 p.m., the power went out.

Silence.

Then—

“OH NO NOT AGAIN—” Sid sat up, eyes wide.

Jane screamed.





Nik screamed because Jane screamed.

Sam's dad walked in with a candle and said calmly, "Relax. Just a power cut. Happens every year during mango season."

Sid was breathing fast.
Too fast.

Mario reached over and grabbed his hand. "Breathe with me. Like this. Four in... hold... four out..."

The Squad copied him.

In.
Hold.
Out.

"Let's name ten things in this room," Sam whispered.
"Why?" Sid croaked.

"It helps. Distraction game. Go."

"Bean bag," said Jane.

"Pizza box," said Nik.

"Someone's sock that smells like doom," said Mario.

Sid laughed.

A real, snorty, surprised laugh.

And just like that, the grip in his chest loosened.

Later, in the dim light of Mario's torch, Sid whispered, "I really thought something bad was going to happen."

"Maybe nothing happened outside," Mario said softly, "but something did inside you."

"Like what?"

"Like... fear got loud. But then you got louder."

Sid stared at the ceiling. "It helped... being with you guys."

"That's what squads are for," Sam said, already half-asleep.

Nik murmured, "Also for pizza. Never forget pizza."

And Jane added, "Also, next time someone feels scared, don't wait till the squirrel finds out before we do."

Sid slept that night.

Like a panda after a dance recital.

And somewhere between the boom and the quiet, he learned something big:

It's okay to be scared.
It's not okay to stay alone in it.

Not when you have a squad.

THE END



THE CALM MAP

What you need:

A blank sheet of paper, coloured pens or pencils, and a quiet space.

HOW TO DO:

- 1 Draw a large circle in the centre of your page — this is your Calm Zone.
- 2 Around the circle, draw five smaller circles or bubbles. In each one, write or draw something that helps you feel calmer when you're scared or anxious — for example:
 - Deep breathing (like Mario's "four in, hold, four out")
 - Talking to someone safe
 - Doing something funny or distracting
 - Naming five things you can see in the room
 - Listening to music or hugging a soft toy
- 3 Now, draw connecting lines from your outer bubbles to the centre. Label each line "My way back to calm."

- 4 When your Calm Map is ready, share it with a friend or parent and ask about their calm ideas. You might discover new ones to add!

Reflection/Purpose: This activity helps children recognise that fear doesn't have to take control — they can draw their own pathways back to calm. By mapping their coping strategies visually, they learn to name emotions, remember what works, and see that safety isn't just outside them — it's also something they can build inside and share with others.

FIVE FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT THE SCIENCE OF CALM



1. YOUR BRAIN HAS AN ALARM BUTTON.

Deep inside your brain is a tiny almond-shaped part called the amygdala. It's like a personal alarm system. When you hear a sudden sound or feel scared, it sends a “danger alert” to the rest of your body. The problem? It doesn't always know the difference between real danger and loud thunder!

2. FEAR TRAVELS FASTER THAN THOUGHT.

When you're startled, your body reacts before your brain has even figured out what's happening. Your heart races, your muscles tighten, and you might freeze or shout. This “fight, flight, or freeze” response is your body's way of preparing to stay safe — even if the danger turns out to be just fireworks outside.

3. BREATHING CAN TRICK THE BRAIN.

Slow, deep breathing tells your brain, “It’s okay now.” When you breathe in for four counts, hold, and breathe out for four, you send signals to your nervous system that reduce stress chemicals like adrenaline. That’s why Mario’s breathing exercise worked — it gave Sid’s body proof that the danger had passed.

4. LAUGHTER AND FRIENDSHIP RESET THE SYSTEM.

When you laugh or spend time with people who make you feel safe, your brain releases oxytocin — the “connection chemical.” It calms the alarm signals and brings your heartbeat back to normal. That’s why Sid felt lighter after laughing with the Squad — fear can’t shout as loudly when friendship is speaking.



5. CALM IS A SKILL, NOT A SWITCH.

Even brave people get scared — the difference is they've learned how to return to calm faster.

Breathing, grounding games, and naming what you feel are like exercises that make your emotional muscles stronger. The more you practise, the easier it gets to find your calm when fear shows up.



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THE SOUND IN THE SKY

It started as a faint rumble — low, distant, like thunder thinking about waking up. Then came the crack. A sound so sharp that every window in the neighbourhood seemed to jump.

Lukas dropped his comic book. Across the room, his little sister Freja screamed.

“What was that?” she cried.

“Probably fireworks,” he said quickly — though his stomach felt tight. There were no festivals tonight.

The lights flickered once, twice... then went out.

Lukas’s heart began to thump like a drum he couldn’t stop. He could see his reflection faintly in the glass — eyes wide, mouth open. The silence after the boom was worse than the sound itself.

He wanted to call for his parents, but his voice got stuck halfway. His throat felt like a closed door.

In the dark, Freja whispered, “Lukas? Are we safe?”

He took a shaky breath. “I think so. Just... stay close.”

He reached for his torch, but his hands were trembling.

And then...



- What did Lukas do next to help his sister, or himself, feel safe?
- Did he remember a trick, like breathing or naming things around him?
- What happened when the lights came back on?
- How did he feel once the noise was finally explained?
- What could Lukas learn from that night about being brave and calm at the same time?

Your turn to finish the story

See you next Monday with another interesting story!

Got feedback or a suggestion? We would love to hear it!
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