

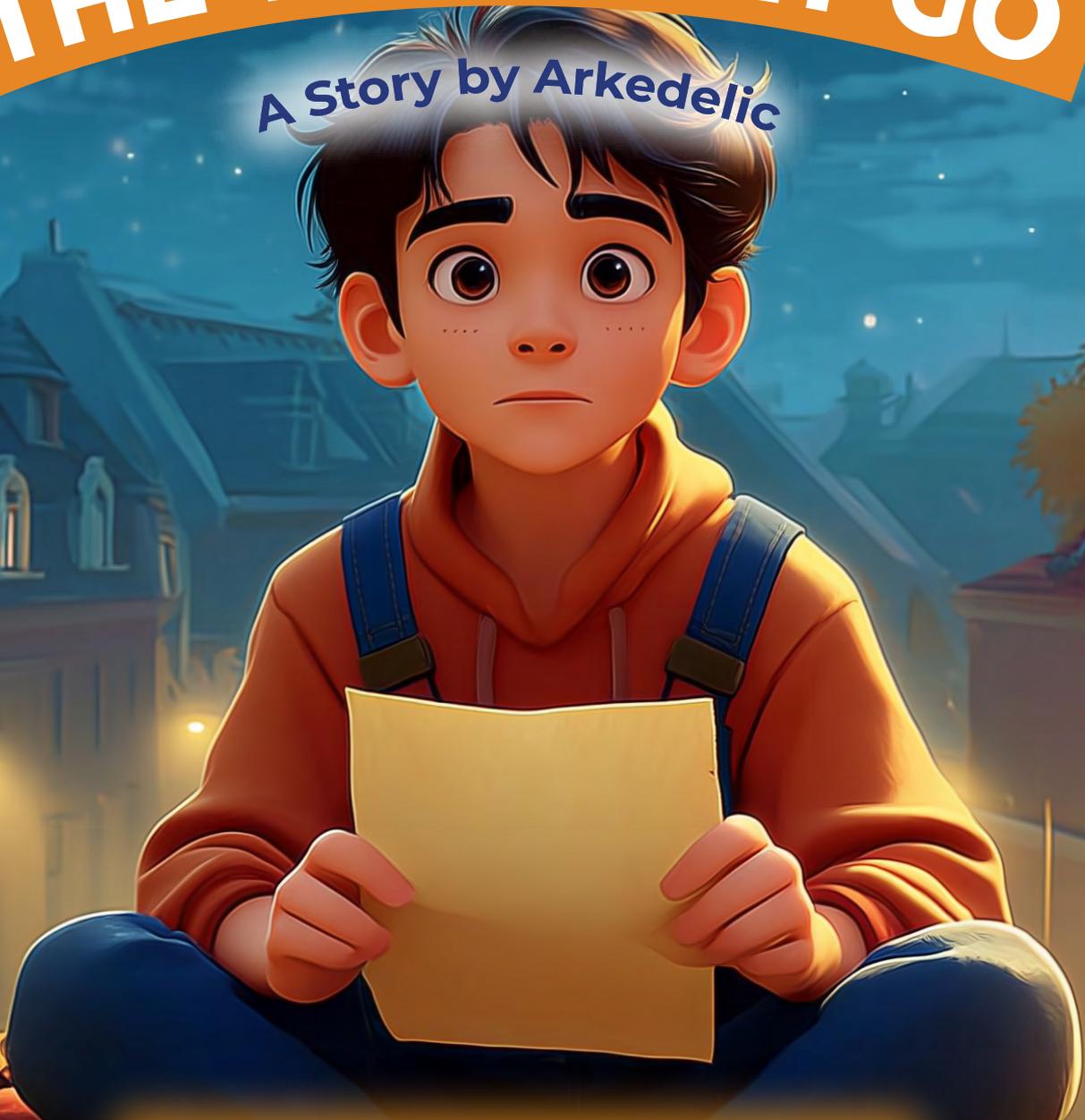


**7 to 10**  
YEARS

BUILDING BEAUTIFUL INSIDE

# THE YEAR I LET GO

A Story by Arkedelic



## Parents' Guide

# STUDENT CONC

## THE YEAR I LET GO

1

Story  
3-6

2

Building Beautiful Inside  
7-9

3

Concept Assessment  
10-11

*Copyright Protected: All content and materials presented are the exclusive property of StoryWalker365 protected under copyright and trademark laws. Unauthorised reproduction, distribution, or commercial use is prohibited. This content is for personal use only. For permission requests, contact us at [voice@storywalker.com](mailto:voice@storywalker.com).*

## THE YEAR I LET GO

Nik stared at the small blank slip of paper in his hand.

He had written nothing on it. Not yet.

All around him, the Squad huddled in sleeping bags on the rooftop — stars above, sparklers crackling, hot chocolate steaming in mugs. It was their “New Year sleepover,” a Sunshine Squad tradition. Sid had brought speakers. Mario had brought marshmallows. Jane had brought her clipboard of rituals.

“This year,” Jane declared, “we’re doing something new. Everyone writes one thing from this past year they want to leave behind — something that hurt, or felt heavy, or is just time to let go of. Then we toss it into the fire tin. Gone.”

“Ooooooh, very drama,” said Sam. “I love it.”

Jane passed around slips of paper and a green marker.

Mario went first. “I’m burning the time I broke my mom’s favourite bowl and blamed the dog.”  
Poof! Into the tin.

Sid followed. “My old diary. It’s so full of weird angry poems about homework.”



Laughter. Poof.

Sam held up hers. “My obsession with becoming the tallest in class. I give up. Nik has won.”

Even more laughter. Poof.

Jane’s was quiet. “All the times I forced myself to smile when I really needed to talk.”

Poof.

Nik’s hand stayed closed.

He had so many things.

The notebook he lost in June — one Mario lent him with all his science notes. Nik never admitted he’d left it on the school bus.

The cricket tryout. He had frozen. Couldn’t swing. Couldn’t move. People said it was nerves. But it had never stopped replaying in his head.



And Aarav.

His best friend since second grade. They’d been everything — partners in all class projects, neighbours, even co-founders of the now-dead “Dino Dudes Club.” But ever since Aarav moved schools, things had changed. He was busy, distracted, making new friends. Nik had held on, texting, joking, sending memes, pretending it was all still the same.

But it wasn’t.

Later that night, Jane found him sitting alone by the ledge.

“Still thinking?” she asked.

Nik nodded. “Everyone’s tossing away silly things. I don’t know how to write mine down.”

“You don’t have to tell me,” Jane said, “but can I ask something?”

Nik shrugged. “Sure.”

“What are you holding onto — because it’s still important? And what are you holding on to just because you’re afraid of what comes next?”

Nik looked at the stars. “I don’t want to forget Aarav. Or pretend we weren’t friends.”

Jane nodded. “You don’t have to forget. But maybe you don’t have to chase it anymore either.”

Nik didn’t speak for a long time. Then quietly, he said, “I keep hoping he’ll message first. I keep checking.”

“And every time he doesn’t,” Jane said softly, “it hurts a little more.”

Nik exhaled. “Yeah.”

They sat together for a while.

Then he pulled out the paper.

And slowly wrote:

“It was real. But it’s okay to let it rest.”

He added one more line underneath:

“It’s not my job to keep what’s already gone.”

He walked over and dropped it into the tin.

Poof

When he came back, he felt lighter, and heavier, all at once.

“You okay?” Sid asked.

“I think so,” Nik said.





He didn't expect magic. He didn't expect Aarav to call tomorrow. But something had shifted. A kind of tightness had eased.

He noticed his breathing.

He noticed the quiet.

And for the first time in months, it didn't feel scary.

Just still.

The next morning, Jane handed out folded slips with new year affirmations.

Nik opened his.

It read:

“Balance isn't about being fine all the time. It's about knowing when to know and rest your heart.”

Nik folded it carefully and slipped it into his pocket.

Some things you don't hold on to.

Some things — you carry forward.

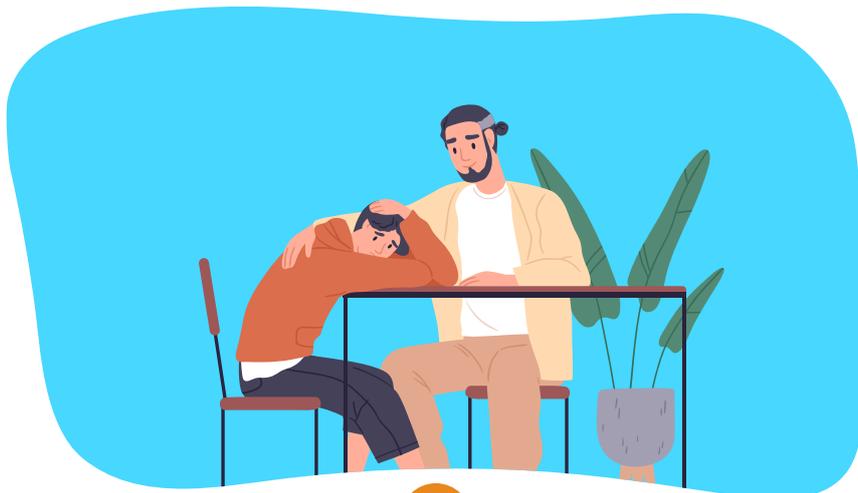
**THE END**

**VALUES FROM  
THE STORY****1. How can I help my child stop holding on — to a friendship, habit, or thing that no longer feels right for them?**

**Context in the story:** Nik clings to several emotional weights — a broken friendship, a lost notebook, a failed tryout — but he especially struggles with accepting the shift in his friendship with Aarav. Though Aarav has moved on, Nik continues to check his phone, keep up the act, and replay old memories. It's only through Jane's quiet nudge and the group ritual that he begins to release what no longer serves him, without denying that it once mattered.

**Real-world connection:** Children often hold on to friendships, habits, or routines long after they've stopped being helpful — sometimes out of fear, guilt, or sadness. But they may lack the tools or language to understand what “letting go” really means.

**How parents can use the story:** This story gives parents a gentle entry point to discuss emotional release. Rather than pushing a child to “move on,” it invites reflection — what are they holding onto, and why? The story also shows that letting go isn't forgetting or pretending it didn't matter — it's about recognising when something has changed and choosing peace over pain. Parents can use this moment to talk about healthy endings and the freedom that can follow.



## 2. How can I help my child maintain balance and mental well-being?

**Context in the story:** Nik is emotionally cluttered — filled with memories, unresolved guilt, and disappointment he hasn't processed. His mental space is noisy and unsettled. The rooftop ritual, and especially his quiet talk with Jane, helps him pause, reflect, and begin to clear that emotional buildup. Letting go becomes an act of self-care, not defeat.

**Real-world connection:** Children often don't recognise when their emotional systems are overloaded. They may carry tension, guilt, or sadness for months, mistaking it for “normal.” Without chances to name or release these feelings, their emotional balance suffers.

**How parents can use the story:** Parents can use this story to introduce the idea that mental well-being is not just about being happy — it's about learning to pause, reflect, and make room inside ourselves. Ask your child what they'd put in a “burn-the-past” tin. What are they carrying that might be tiring them out? Model your own releases, too. Show them it's okay to let go of your own regrets and worries. Together, this builds emotional clarity and trust.





### 3. How can I support my child through changes like shifting schools or saying goodbye to close friends?

**Context in the story:** Nik's story with Aarav echoes a common childhood experience — the fading of a once-deep friendship due to school changes and new social circles. Nik feels confused, abandoned, and unsure whether to keep reaching out. The moment he acknowledges that things have changed, and that it's not his job to force it, marks the start of healing.

**Real-world connection:** Whether it's due to a move, changing interests, or new environments, children often experience the loss of friendships — but may not know how to grieve that shift or express the resulting feelings of rejection or sadness.

**How parents can use the story:** Use this story to help your child understand that friendship transitions are real and valid and that sadness doesn't mean failure. Parents can guide their children in recognizing the difference between holding on out of hope and holding on out of habit. Support them in finding language to say goodbye internally, even if there's no big closure. And most importantly, assure them that their value isn't tied to who stays, but to how gently and bravely they move forward.

## Assessment Questions for “The Year I Let Go”



**Q1.** Why did Nik find it so hard to let go of his friendship with Aarav?

**Purpose:** To help children understand that endings don't erase meaning, they create room for growth.

**Follow-up:** Have you ever kept thinking about something or someone even after it changed?

**Q2.** What did Nik's note, “It was real. But it's okay to let it rest,” mean to him?

**Purpose:** To show that releasing a memory isn't the same as pretending it never mattered.

**Follow-up:** What's one memory you'd like to keep in your heart, even if it's time to move on?

**Q3.** Why did Nik describe feeling lighter and heavier at the same time after the ritual?

**Purpose:** To help children notice how unspoken guilt or regret can feel heavy over time.

**Follow-up:** How does your body feel when you're holding on to a worry for too long?

**Q4.** How did the rooftop ritual help Nik find peace with his mixed feelings?

**Purpose:** To teach that mental balance comes from pausing, naming, and releasing feelings safely.

**Follow-up:** What helps you feel calm when your thoughts feel crowded or tangled?

**Q5.** What did the final message Jane gave Nik, "Balance isn't about being fine all the time..." mean to him?

**Purpose:** To remind children that we can keep lessons and love even after something ends.

**Follow-up:** What lesson or memory would you want to carry forward into a new year?

**Explore the complete  
Sunshine Squad Series  
and other value-driven stories at**

[www.storywalker365.com](http://www.storywalker365.com)



***Tap on the icon to follow us for more fun!***

Copyright Protected: All content and materials presented are the exclusive property of StoryWalker365 and protected under copyright and trademark laws. Unauthorised reproduction, distribution, or commercial use is prohibited. This content is for personal use only. For permission requests, contact us at [voice@storywalker.com](mailto:voice@storywalker.com).