

Prompt 1: The Classroom Lights

"The Dark Classroom"

Rain hammered against the classroom windows like a thousand tiny drummers as Miss Ramnarine explained our mathematics homework. I was busy copying numbers into my book when it happened. As the classroom lights flickered and went out, a hush fell over the room. For a moment, nobody moved. Then Keisha let out a small squeal, and everyone began whispering at once, our voices tangling together like vines.

"Stay calm, everyone," Miss Ramnarine said, though I noticed her own voice trembled slightly. Thunder cracked outside like a giant clapping its hands, and the room grew darker still as clouds rolled over the sun. I felt someone grab my hand under the desk — it was Amrit, my deskmate, gripping tightly. "I don't like the dark," he whispered. I squeezed his hand back. "It's just a power cut," I told him, trying to sound braver than I felt. My heart, though, was thudding like a coconut falling from a tree.

Miss Ramnarine found the emergency flashlight in her desk drawer and switched it on, casting long shadows across the walls. "Let's turn this into an adventure," she said, smiling. "Who can tell a story using only the flashlight for light?"

One by one, we took turns, our voices weaving spooky and silly tales while shadows danced like puppets on the ceiling. Even Amrit laughed when Keisha's story about a talking mango had everyone in stitches.

By the time the lights buzzed back on twenty minutes later, nobody was frightened anymore. We blinked in the sudden brightness, grinning at each other like we shared a secret. "That," Miss Ramnarine said, closing her flashlight, "is how you turn darkness into light."



Prompt 2: Mangoes in Grandma's Yard

"The Visitor in the Mango Tree"

Every Saturday morning, I climbed over the low wall into Grandma's yard to pick mangoes before the sun grew too hot. The tree stood tall and proud, its branches heavy with fruit like ornaments on a Christmas tree. This morning, I reached up with my rod, humming to myself, when I noticed something unusual hiding in the branches — a pair of round, golden eyes blinking down at me.

I froze, my breath catching in my throat. Slowly, a small owl shuffled along the branch, its feathers ruffled and one wing tucked oddly against its body. "Grandma!" I called out, keeping my eyes on the owl. "Come quick!" Grandma hurried out, wiping flour from her hands onto her apron. She squinted up at the tree and gasped softly. "Poor thing," she murmured. "Looks like it hurt its wing."

Together, we fetched an old basket lined with a soft towel. Grandma climbed the small stepladder while I held it steady, my hands shaking like leaves in the breeze. Gently, she cupped the owl in her floured hands and lowered it into the basket. The owl blinked up at us with its two full eyes and turned its head all the way around, before settling quietly into the towel.

We carried it inside and called Mr. Ali, who worked at the wildlife sanctuary in town. He arrived within the hour, praising us for being so careful. "This little fellow will be flying again in no time," he assured us.

As his van drove away, I felt a warm glow of pride spreading through my chest, bright as the morning sun. Grandma squeezed my shoulder. "Some days," she said, "the mango tree gives us more than just fruit." I couldn't wait to tell everyone at school on Monday.



Prompt 3: The Pavilion Bench

"We Actually Did It"

The football had never felt heavier than it did in the final five minutes of the championship match. Our team, the Riverside Eagles, was down by one goal, and the crowd's cheering rattled in my ears like coins in a tin pan.

Coach Phillip called a timeout, sweat dripping down his forehead. "One more push," he said. "Marcus, get that ball to the goal." My legs burned like fire as I sprinted back onto the field. The opposing team's defense closed in around me, a wall of blue jerseys, but I spotted Tariq open on the wing and passed the ball just before three players collided into me.

Tariq crossed it beautifully, and I threw myself forward, connecting with the ball just as the whistle screamed for full time. The ball sailed past the goalkeeper's fingertips and into the net like a bird finding its nest. For one heartbeat, the whole field went silent. Then the crowd exploded into cheers so loud the ground seemed to shake beneath my feet. My teammates piled on top of me, laughing and shouting, and Coach Phillip's eyes shone with tears he tried to blink away.

Later, lying on the pavilion bench after the final whistle blew, Marcus grinned and whispered, "We actually did it." Wait — that was me. I was Marcus. I laughed at my own joke, my ribs aching from both the match and the celebration.

My ankle throbbed where someone had stepped on it, but I didn't care. I stared up at the darkening sky, stars beginning to blink awake one by one, and felt a happiness so full it almost hurt. Tomorrow, my legs would be sore. But tonight, I was a champion.

