

Prompt 1: The Hospital Waiting Room

"Everything Will Be Alright"

The hospital waiting room smelled of antiseptic and old coffee, and the fluorescent lights buzzed overhead like trapped insects. My little brother Zion had been rushed in after falling from the mango tree in our yard, his arm bent at a wrong angle that made my stomach churn.

Mummy paced back and forth, her sandals slapping against the tiled floor like a nervous drumbeat. I sat frozen in a plastic chair, replaying the accident over and over — the crack of the branch, Zion's scream, the terrifying stillness afterward. "Aliyah Ramdass?" a nurse called out.

Mummy rushed to my side, gripping my hand as we followed the nurse down a long, quiet hallway. My heart pounded so hard I feared it might leap right out of my chest. We found Zion sitting up in a hospital bed, his arm already wrapped in a fresh white cast, looking pale but awake. Relief flooded through me like cool water on a hot day.

"He's going to be just fine," the doctor reassured us with a gentle smile. "A clean break. Kids heal fast." Sitting in the hospital waiting room, I squeezed my mother's hand and thought, "Everything will be alright now." That thought had stayed with me the entire time, like a small candle flickering bravely in the dark, refusing to go out no matter how frightening things became.

Zion managed a weak grin. "Can I still climb the tree when this comes off?" Mummy laughed despite the tears in her eyes. "Not for a long, long while." That evening, as we drove home with Zion's cast propped carefully on a pillow, the street lights blurred past the window like streaks of gold. I leaned my head against Mummy's shoulder, grateful beyond words that my brother was safe beside me.



Prompt 2: The Open Coop Door

"Trouble in the Chicken Coop"

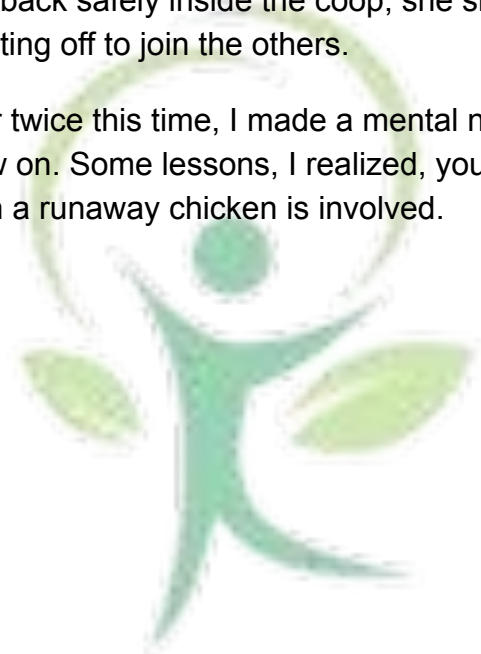
The rooster's crowing woke me before my alarm, sharp and insistent like a tiny trumpet demanding attention. Knowing fully well why he was making such noises, I dragged myself out of bed to feed the chickens, still yawning, my slippers scuffing against the dewy grass. As I approached the coop, I noticed one of the doors had been left wide open. My stomach dropped the moment I saw it, the latch swinging loose in the morning breeze.

"Oh no," I whispered, counting quickly. Five chickens. There should have been six. Peeping Tom, our old speckled hen, was missing. Panic bubbled up inside me like a pot boiling over. I dropped the feed bucket and dashed around the yard, calling her name, though I knew she couldn't answer.

I searched behind the water tank, under the porch, even inside Daddy's toolshed, my heart racing faster with every empty spot. Finally, near the fence line, I spotted a trail of feathers leading toward the neighbour's yard. Following the trail like a detective on a case, I found Peeping Tom stuck in a tangle of hibiscus bushes, clucking indignantly, one wing caught in the branches.

"There you are, you silly bird!" I laughed with relief, carefully untangling her feathers, ignoring her irritated pecking at my fingers. I carried her back home, cradled against my chest like a fussy baby, her heart fluttering rapidly against my arm. When I placed her back safely inside the coop, she shook out her feathers dramatically before strutting off to join the others.

Latching the door twice this time, I made a mental note to check it every single morning from now on. Some lessons, I realized, you only need to learn once — especially when a runaway chicken is involved.



Prompt 3: The Kite in the Storm

"The Kite That Chased the Clouds"

Saturday afternoons belonged to kite flying on the open savannah, where the wind always seemed to know exactly when to blow. I gripped my homemade kite's string tightly, running across the grass until it lifted gracefully into the pale blue sky. My best friend Devesh cheered beside me, his own kite dipping and swirling nearby like a colourful dancing fish. Clouds gathered overhead, darker than I'd noticed before, but I was having too much fun to care.

The kite dipped, spun, and suddenly shot straight up into the dark clouds. I gasped, my hands nearly losing grip on the spinning reel. Wind howled around us, tugging fiercely at the string like an invisible giant playing tug-of-war. "Let it go!" Devesh shouted over the rising wind. "Real rain coming!"

"No!" I yelled back stubbornly. "I made this kite myself!" Thunder rumbled in the distance, and fat raindrops began splattering against my cheeks. My arms ached from fighting the wind's pull, but I refused to release my precious kite, its bright colours now swallowed by the darkening clouds above.

Just as lightning flickered on the horizon, the string suddenly went slack. My heart sank like a stone into water. The kite had snapped free, tumbling wildly out of sight. Devesh grabbed my arm, pulling me toward shelter as rain poured down in earnest, soaking us both within seconds. We laughed breathlessly under the pavilion's roof, watching the rain rage outside.

"We'll make a stronger one next weekend," Devesh promised, patting my shoulder. Though my kite was gone, carried off by the wind like a wish sent skyward, I smiled anyway. Some things, I realized, weren't meant to be held onto forever.

