

Prompt 1: The Power Outage

"The Night the Street Went Dark"

Every evening, our street buzzed with the sounds of televisions, barking dogs, and neighbours chatting across fences. I was finishing my homework at the kitchen table when in an instant, the power went out across the entire street, and the night grew strangely quiet.

"Not again," Mummy sighed, feeling her way toward the kitchen drawer for candles. I sat frozen for a moment, my pencil suspended mid-sentence, as darkness swallowed the room whole. Outside, I heard neighbours murmuring, their voices carrying strangely clear through the still night air. Mummy lit a candle, and its small flame flickered bravely, casting dancing shadows across the walls like tiny ghosts performing a show just for us.

"Let's check on Mr. Aleong next door," Mummy suggested. "He's not used to walking around in the dark with his bad knee." We grabbed a flashlight and crossed our shared fence carefully, calling out so we wouldn't startle him. Mr. Aleong sat on his porch step, looking relieved to see our bobbing light. "Thought I'd be stuck stumbling around all night," he chuckled, accepting Mummy's offered candle gratefully.

We ended up sitting together on his porch, the three of us, watching stars emerge overhead brighter than I'd ever noticed before, uninterrupted by streetlights or television glow. Mr. Aleong told stories about growing up without electricity at all, how families gathered outside every single night just to talk beneath the stars.

"Maybe outages aren't so bad," I said, surprising myself. Mummy laughed softly. "Maybe not, but it should not be this often." When the lights finally flickered back on an hour later, illuminating the street in familiar yellow glow, I almost felt a small pang of disappointment. The darkness, it turned out, had brought us closer together than the light ever had.

Prompt 2: The Old Photograph

"The Photograph in the Drawer"

Our house buzzed with excitement as we prepared for Sunday's family lime. Streamers hung from the ceiling like colourful vines and the smell of curry crab drifting from the kitchen filled the air. As I assisted my sister with the decorations, I stumbled upon an old photograph tucked inside a drawer. Although I have been in that drawer many times before, packing and unpacking table cloths and sheets, it was the first time that I had to completely empty the drawer to find what I was looking for. Placing the drawer back into its hole in the cupboard, I noticed the photo stuck to the bottom of the drawer.

The photograph showed a group of young people standing outside a small wooden house, laughing at something outside the frame. I recognized my grandmother instantly, though she looked barely older than my teenage cousin Simone. "Mummy, who are these people?" I called out, carrying the photograph carefully into the kitchen.

Mummy wiped her hands and studied it closely, her expression softening like melting chocolate. "That's your Grandma Ivy with her old dance troupe," she said. "They used to perform at every village fete." Grandma Ivy herself shuffled over, curious about mom's revelation. When she saw the photograph, her hand flew to her chest, her mouth forming a complete 'O'. "I haven't seen this in forty years," she whispered, tracing the faces gently with her fingertip. "This was taken the night before Winston proposed to me."

The whole kitchen fell quiet, listening as Grandma Ivy told stories about dancing under string lights, about young love blooming like hibiscus in rainy season, about friends long since scattered across the world.

When the family arrived for the lime that afternoon, Grandma Ivy proudly displayed the photograph on the mantelpiece, and everyone gathered around it throughout the evening, adding their own memories like pieces of a puzzle finally coming together. I sat back, watching my family laugh and reminisce, grateful that a simple decorating mishap had uncovered such a precious piece of our history.

Prompt 3: The Best Mistake

"The Best Mistake We Ever Made"

What was supposed to be a simple hike up Paria trail turned into an entire day's adventure after Jaden and I took a wrong turn near the waterfall junction, following a path neither of us recognized.

"Are you sure this is right?" I asked nervously, glancing at the unfamiliar trees crowding around us like curious giants. "Positive," Jaden said, though his wavering voice betrayed his own doubt. We pressed onward anyway, our sneakers squelching through mud, branches scratching at our arms like scolding fingers. Just when I began seriously worrying we were lost, the trees suddenly opened into a hidden clearing.

Before us stretched a small, secluded waterfall we had never seen mentioned on any map, sunlight sparkling on the pool below like scattered diamonds. Butterflies danced lazily around wildflowers blooming along the water's edge. "Whoa," Jaden breathed, his earlier worry forgotten entirely. We spent the rest of the afternoon swimming in the cool water, our laughter echoing off moss-covered rocks, forgetting completely about the correct trail we had lost hours earlier.

By the time we finally decided to leave our private pool, our only wish was remembering how we got there to make our way back out. As the evening sun began dimming, our leisurely stroll quickly became a power walk that our lives depended on. After about an hour of walking, we heard the distant sound of other hikers' voices. Relieved wouldn't even capture our mood at this point.

Sitting under the tamarind tree after the long hike, Jaden laughed and said, "That was the best mistake we ever made." I nodded in complete agreement, my legs aching pleasantly, my skin still cool from the waterfall's embrace. We never did find that hidden waterfall marked on any map afterward, no matter how hard we searched. Some treasures, I realized, are only found by accident.

