

Prompt 1: The Rustling Under the Leaves

"Something in the Leaves"

Cleaning out the old chicken coop was my least favourite Saturday chore, especially with the afternoon sun beating down and the smell of poop tickling my nose like invisible feathers. I swear, every Saturday I'd wish all our chickens simply disappeared. What I did not expect today, was the gift that awaited me.

While raking the poop, wondering how it was possible that these little animals pooped so much, I heard a strange rustling sound coming from beneath a pile of dried leaves stacked in the corner of the coop. Being the neighbourhood coward, I paused mid-rake, frozen on the spot, deciding if to run or "man-up".

"Who's there?" I whispered, feeling silly the moment the words left my mouth. Leaves don't answer, and my question was so soft that they wouldn't hear it even if they could speak. I crept closer, my heart thudding steadily louder with each cautious step. Using the rake handle, I nudged the leaves aside slowly, half expecting a rat to go scurrying past my feet.

Instead, curled up in a tight, trembling ball, was a tiny orange kitten, no bigger than my two closed fists, its fur matted with dirt and its cries barely audible. "Oh, you poor little thing," I whispered, scooping it up gently, calling for Mummy at the top of my lungs.

As she saw the kitten in my hand she exclaimed, "Not another! Get it out!" I wasn't even planning on getting another pet, but I guess she knew me better than I knew myself. Although she help me feed and clean it, I was given strict orders to get it another home by dinner time, or I'd have to move out with it.

After finishing my chores that day, my mother's wish was my command. I took every opportunity to woo her. By evening, I had her in the palm of my hand. Now, my kitten had fallen asleep curled in a blanket nest beside my bed, purring softly like a tiny, contented engine.

Prompt 2: The Music Stopped

"When the Music Stopped"

The school hall buzzed with excitement during our annual talent show. Colourful streamers swayed gently from ceiling fans as performers took turns showcasing their skills. I sat near the front, watching eagerly, popcorn crunching between my teeth. Midway through a dazzling dance performance, suddenly, the music stopped, and every eye in the room turned toward the door. My stomach twisted with confusion alongside everyone else's.

Standing in the doorway was our principal, Mr. Boodram, his face unusually pale, whispering urgently to Miss Charles near the sound system. A murmur rippled through the audience like wind through tall grass. "Is everything alright?" someone whispered nearby. Miss Charles stepped up to the microphone, clearing her throat nervously. "I'm sorry for the interruption, everyone. We've just been informed that severe weather is approaching quickly. We need to move to the main building immediately."

Chaos erupted briefly as students and parents gathered belongings, chairs scraping loudly against the wooden floor. I grabbed my little sister's hand tightly, guiding her through the shuffling crowd toward the exit, rain already beginning to patter against the roof like impatient fingers drumming. We hurried across the courtyard just as the skies opened fully, thunder rumbling overhead like an enormous, grumbling giant.

Teachers ushered everyone quickly into the sturdy main building, where we huddled together, damp but safe, waiting out the sudden storm. Surprisingly, nobody seemed too upset. Someone started humming the tune from the interrupted dance performance, and soon the whole hallway joined in, turning our unexpected shelter into an impromptu concert of our own.

When the rain finally eased about three hours later, we were all eager to get home. Cars zoomed off the school's compound as though the last one left would be jailed for being too slow. Although the concert was an interrupted planned school event, being at home for round two was our best bet.

Prompt 3: The School Garden

"What We Dug Up in the Garden"

Our school garden project had been going smoothly for weeks. There were neat rows of beds and tiny green sprouts poking up like curious flag poles from each bed. On Friday afternoon, our class gathered with trowels and gloves to plant the final row of pumpkin seeds, out addition to the entire project.

Each student was assigned a special task, making sure were all contributing to the project will saving time. My task was to dig the holes, so my group members could place the seed, before covering them up and watering the spot. As I dug my trowel deep into the bed to dig my fourth hole, my trowel struck something hard and smooth beneath the soil. I knew immediately, it definitely was not a rock.

"Miss Alexander, look!" I called out, brushing dirt away carefully with my fingers. Half-buried in the earth was a small, weathered metal box, its surface dulled green with age. The entire class crowded around excitedly as Miss Alexander knelt beside me, her eyebrows raised with curiosity. "Well, isn't this interesting," she murmured, helping me pry the rusted lid open.

Inside, wrapped in a plastic bag, was a folded note and a handful of old coins. The note, though faded, was still legible: *"Planted by the Standard Five class of 1998. Future students — may your gardens grow even taller than ours did!"* The entire class erupted into excited chatter, imagining students who had stood in this very spot nearly thirty years earlier, planting their own seeds and burying their own message for the future.

"Should we do the same thing?" Devika suggested eagerly. Miss Alexander smiled warmly. "I think that's a wonderful idea." We spent the rest of the afternoon writing our own note, describing our class, our hopes for the garden, and messages for whichever students might discover it decades from now. We sealed it carefully inside a new container and buried it deep beneath the pumpkin row, patting the soil down firmly.

Walking home that afternoon, I couldn't stop smiling, wondering about the future students who would one day dig up our own hidden message, just as we had discovered one meant for us.