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# A BROKEN DAY

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Story By - Dr. Anuradha Sovani

**Vik** woke up and stared at the old trunk filled with story books under his bed. It was still very early and there was not much light in the room. The cupboards looked amazingly huge, and the bed loomed above. Had he fallen out of bed at night?

Then he grinned to himself, and remembered that he had not fallen, but actually come down here to sleep on the lovely cool floor because it was so hot. It did feel good down here, actually, like a sort of bear cub in a cave, coming out of hibernation.

He checked his tooth, but it was still there. It was moving like crazy but had not fallen off still. He had no plans of telling anyone about it, because the last time his

mother had tied a thread to it and pulled it out! How cruel! Just imagine how that poor tooth must have felt, there inside a warm mouth one minute, bending this way and that as the tongue pushed it around, and then suddenly yanked out and dangling at the end of a thread!

He pricked up his ears and listened for sounds around the house. Dogs could actually prick up their ears, he could not; but he just imagined them standing out, away from his head. It was strangely quiet, which meant that the electricity was still off. Last night there had been a major power outage, and everyone in the house was complaining. People were so used to electricity and water, phones and couriers, he thought to himself. Fans,

lights, air conditioners, televisions, computers, refrigerators.....where did the list end?

Vik sometimes liked to pretend he was actually a bear cub or a puppy. Then what difference did it make if these appliances were there in the house, or whether they worked. As long as stars shone and plants grew and his friends came out to play and his mom hugged him and told him a story at night before he went to sleep, .....wow!

Vik suddenly sat up with a jerk, and banged his head on the bottom edge of his study chair. Plants growing made him think of the one he had planted in the balcony and was watering every day! He had to go and check if there was a flower as yet.....

He got up, rubbed his head, dusted himself down because floors were not always as clean as they looked. In fact, Vik knew by now that most things were not quite how they looked. He knew that even if a floor or desk or chair looked shining clean, all you had to do was bend down and look along the surface, and there would be a dust bunny in some corner, and plenty of dust particles all across the surface and sometimes even a spider.

He knew that people sometimes smiled when they were actually very angry or jealous or even sad inside, and when that happened, you were supposed to look at their eyes and not their mouth, and you knew right away that they were not really smiling at all.

He knew that a yellow book and a pink book could look exactly the same at night, and you would never know the difference, because night sucked up these colours and made them the same.

Oh, he knew a lot of things that nobody else did, simply because he looked and listened and did not talk as much as everybody else. But he was glad the lights had not yet come back on, because then he could look out and see faint outlines of buildings around and pretend this was some mysterious city. And nobody would be putting on the news on television, or a loud song, and spoiling the quiet.

He crept into the balcony and checked for the flower. Disappointment.....it had not yet grown out of the soil.

He peeped into his parent's room and saw his father fast asleep, with his feet sticking out from the bottom of the bed and the sheet all tangled up around him...Vik smiled, and decided he must teach his dad about sleeping on the floor and how good and cool it felt. But looked like mom had already gone to work. Sad, he had hoped to see her first thing in the morning. Her hair was always flat on one side when she got out of bed, and she had on odd colored slippers because she could not find a pair, and she always looked more interesting than anyone else. And she always smelled like sunshine.

He went to the kitchen and got himself some milk, which tasted odd because the fridge was out, , but he had swallowed it before he realized that.....

ah well, too late. The ice cream he had made last night by melting some sweets in water and putting pieces of raisin and biscuit chips inside now looked like a disgusting mess, and he threw it away in the sink.

So all in all, it was a broken day. No mom, no cold milk, no flower, no ice cream, no tooth fallen out. He felt pretty glum.

Vik disliked broken days. It took a lot of energy to make the day happy and whole again, and he did not really feel so strong and good to do that now. He sat down on the steps outside his house and looked around. The milkman came cycling in and he felt like telling him it was a broken day and he need not deliver the milk because it would not stay fresh in anyone's house.

Same with the vegetables. That is why you should grow your own, he said to himself. Then you don't need a refrigerator. You can just go out, pick some tomatoes and dig up some sweet potatoes and have a nice lunch.

Yup, he knew that too, what grew above ground and what grew inside the soil. He saw the newspaper man and waved. He wondered how he could look so happy, smiling and whistling away as he delivered horrible news to every house, all about deaths and accidents, and virus attacks and people going to war and killing one another, and grabbing money from each other and blaming one another for tons of things that no one cared about.

The car wash finished wiping down the last

from his pocket and lit up. Ewww..... imagine getting all that stuff down your throat .....hot air, smoke, tar, tobacco, who knew what else. Why do people smoke? This guy must be having a really broken day everyday, Vik thought. Anyone would, if they did silly and dangerous things like this to themselves.

He had people in school who did even stranger things. They went online and made thousands and millions of friends, none of whom they knew. How can a person be your friend if you have not hugged them, or shared a salt and red chilli smeared guava in the garden? Or laughed together till you had to clutch your stomach and wipe off the tears?

He knew people who drank alcohol and

behaved like crazy people.

. He knew they thought it was very cool, and had competitions for who could drink more. He knew they smelt weird, and looked and talked real funny. He knew his parents did not like him watching people who got drunk, but he secretly thought it was great fun. They got their tongues all caught up around words, and their feet all caught up with the doormat, and their thoughts all caught up till they did not make any sense any more. And their feelings must be really tangled too, because they sometimes laughed and cried for no reason, or got so mad and yelled.

Grown ups must be having some truly broken days, if they do that to themselves all the time, Vik thought.

Vik got up and went back into his house, suddenly feeling much happier about his own day. He had just realized that older people probably have more broken days than children.

