

## The Boy And His Wish – Zoe, Year 5, VIC

The wind howled and the clouds spat out mouthfuls of rain, and then it became ice. It was a cold rainy here in Wantirna. I was curled up on my bed reading a book about a ghost. I had to hide this book from my mum because she didn't allow scary books, only allowing me to read the books babies read.

I am a 12-year-old boy, but I felt like my mum thinks I am 3. For example, she didn't allow me to eat properly. We have this special machine where it delivers food straight into my stomach. Sometimes if I catch her on a good day, she lets me eat pureed potatoes with plastic utensils in case I break my teeth with the metal ones. We have so many emergency alarms at home which included 10 burglar alarms, tiger alarms and rat alarms!

"Darling, where are you? It's dinner time," muttered my mum. I quickly stuffed my secret book under my pillow and picked up the ABC one.

"I am here mum, I'm just reading my ABC book," I answered. I slowly walked down the stairs since my mum hated it when I run or even jog down the stairs.

After dinner, my mum and I huddled around the fake fire to keep ourselves warm. I had never seen a real fireplace. Mum was afraid that I might burn myself with the real one. Suddenly, I saw a yellow flash outside the window. My mum told me it is a wishing star and that I can make a wish.

"I wish, I wish for....." I stopped. I couldn't decide. I had so many things that I wanted but then I thought of the one thing that was most important.

"I wish for my mum to not be as protective," I whispered. When I looked around, mum was already fast asleep on the couch and started snoring like a bear. The electric plug that holds all the 50 alarms started to make a strange sound, sort of like a dying walrus crossed with fingernails scratching a blackboard. Just then, a fire started to build up, starting small but getting bigger by the minute.

"Mum! Mum! Wake up!" I screamed on top of my lungs, but it didn't work. She was sound asleep, still snoring. I banged my whole body on the door but it didn't budge. I looked for another way to escape. The window! I grabbed one of the chairs and hurled it towards the window.

"Yes!" I exclaimed as the window broke and glass shattered everywhere. I jumped out, with my eyes closed and holding onto my body.

"I am going to die, I am going to die," I repeated to myself over and over again.

I opened my eyes and that's when I realised I was still alive. I landed in a bush with lots of fluffy leaves that mimicked soft padding. My skin was red and bleeding. I stood up, my legs felt like jelly.

Fire was spreading to our neighbouring houses. Our neighbours were all out in the front yard. Everyone around me was screaming and running. Families were crying and hugging. That's when I suddenly remembered that my mum was still inside the building.

My mouth was dry and my eyes were raw from crying. I scanned the area hoping to find the red scarf that my mum would always wear. That was when I heard the worst sound of my life, our house collapsing. Bricks from the walls came crashing onto the ground, the deafening sound that would soon haunt my life. Dust and smoke filled the air.

I screamed my lungs out trying to find my mum, but she was nowhere to be seen. After 20 minutes of trying to find my mum, my legs gave up. I collapsed onto the wet grass. Warm tears slid down my face. That's when I heard a familiar voice.

"John, John, my son, where are you?" shouted someone who sounded just like my mum. That's when I saw the familiar red scarf. I ran up and wrapped her into a big hug.

"I thought you were trapped in the house!" I cried.

"So did I! But I saw a crack in the window and jumped out just in time before it collapsed!" exclaimed my mum.

I knew I had lost everything, but for some reason I didn't feel sad. I felt so relieved and happy. I continued to hold on to mum ever so tightly. Finally, the fire brigade and ambulance arrived.

From that day on, we stayed at the emergency shelter. We survived by eating food donations and were given some old clothes to keep us warm. I should be feeling sad at the conditions we were in, but in fact I felt much happier and closer to my mum. Mum became less protective and was grateful for everything that we had.

I guess the wishing star did come true after all, just not the way we expected.